

Rider Vs Conqueror

by NFS LOVER

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Summary: "What he said was the truth. The only reason they've accepted me is because of what I did...they do it to repent themselves. They've never cared about me". Berk has a new enemy on the rise, one more powerful, and more ruthless than their previous challenges. But how can Hiccup fight him when he's the only he can relate to? So much that he has to decide which side is he on?

1. I'm Leaving

Chapter 1:

_It had been 6 months since Hiccup and Toothless defeated the Red Death at the Dragon's Nest. Ever since then, life on Berk had never been better. The war with dragons was over and now the Vikings and the dragons could finally live in peace with each other. _

The dragons became part of everyday life in Berk. They helped with driving off wild boars that used to be a huge problem and fishing had never resulted in the most bountiful catches before the dragons started helping, although there were still a few minor problems.

_The dragons didn't completely get over their 'playfulness'. They still stole some of the fish that was caught. There were still a few petty fights among some dragons, which Toothless normally had to break up, or one of the other four dragons had to. But aside from all of these troubles, people had grown used to their giant friends and have come to terms with living beside them, and through the daily troubles. _

_On the brighter side, the Berk Dragon Academy was doing extremely well. Hiccup, Astrid, Ruffnut, Tuffnut, Fishlegs and Snotlout were the trainers and did well in coaching the young Vikings about their

dragons. Astrid taught the riders about the Deadly Nadder, with her dragon Stormfly. She went in depth about their loyalty to their rider and their continuous grooming. Snotlout coached the riders about the Monstrous Nightmare with his dragon, Hookfang. He taught them about the personality of a Nightmare (although the two of them never seem like the perfect combination with their fighting). _

_Ruffnut and Tuffnut taught about the Hideous Zippleback, but could hardly get anything done because they started to fight with each other if they didn't agree, and so did Barf and Belch, backing up their riders. And finally there was Fishlegs and his dragon, Meatlug, a Gronckle. The trainees could pick the dragon they would like to learn about after seeing the intro about all of them. _

_Even though Hiccup was the head of the academy, he let his friends coach about the dragons because they knew them extremely well since they rode them, knew their strengths and weaknesses and how it was to live with them. The young riders could come to Hiccup whenever they wanted and ask anything general about the different kinds of dragons, or even about the Night Fury. Everything was going well for the people of Berk, but soon one of them would have to leave for a while.

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Present Time:

The whole village was in a frenzy preparing the ship for a departure to the Atlaka, a major Viking city about 400 miles from Berk. One Viking from Berk was on his way to Atlaka to learn the knowledge of being a chief. A place where he could train and know all the pros and cons of being chief, but it wasn't only a journey of being chief. Stoick, after countless hours, days and weeks, convinced Hiccup to take up arms training, how to fight with swords, axes, archery and survival in the wilderness.

"Come on! Haul those supplies faster! We leave in less than 30 minutes!" Stoick bellowed louder than ever. "For the love Odin Stoick, what's got into ya?" Gobber asked his longtime friend, also helping with the loading of the supplies. "Gobberâ€¦Hiccup is finally gonna learn all the necessary skills to be a chief, and a warrior" Stoick said, ecstatic for what's installed for his son.

"Stoick, Hiccup already conquered the dragons, defeated the mother of all dragons, and ended the war, he's accomplished more than any of us combined" Gobber said, defending his forge apprentice.

"I know Gobber, and don't get me wrong, I'm as proud as any father would be of his son, but like I told you, I won't be around forever, and Hiccup needs to learn more about being a leader than a trainer. He needs to get in there, solve conflicts, be a shining light for the people when times get tough, make difficult decisions. He needs to know all the traits it takes to be chief" Stoick answered. Gobber nodded in agreement. No one could argue that Hiccup had to know what it takes to be a leader, otherwise it'll all fall apart.

"By the way where is Hiccup?" Gobber asked looking around. Stoick just face palmed himself, knowing his son could be anywhere on the island. "You can't change some things Stoick" Gobber said and continued in helping the others.

At The Cove

"So, you're really leaving huh?" a blonde Viking asked as she laid on her back on top of the rock that was next to the small lake. "Yeah, but I don't know for how long I'll be gone" a brown-haired Viking said, who was lying next to her.

It was a beautiful day in Berk. The temperature said otherwise (a chilly 5 degrees) but the sun just seemed to put the cold at bay. The fact that the cove was concealed by many trees, and the sun's rays just breaking through the branches made it a bit romantic for the two. Toothless and Stormfly were also there, watching their riders talk, easily knowing what was going on between them.

"The thing is my dad's right" Hiccup said, starting to get into something. Astrid rolled to her left so she was leaning on him. "I need to learn the traits of being chief, and also hunting, fighting; I can't rely too much on dragons for help" he said, at which point Astrid rolled on top of him and draped her hands over his shoulders and gave his cheek a small peck, to which Hiccup encircled her waist with his arms.

"You're doing the right thing Hiccup. I know going away is tough on you on all of us but it's for the best, so you can lead us" Astrid spoke. "Thanks Astrid, you always know what to say" he said as he stared into her beautiful face. Some of her blonde strands were once again covering over her left eye. Hiccup moved those strands away to reveal her blue eye so it could match the other in equal beauty.

"I promise to be back as soon as possible" he said as he leaned in for a kiss. "You better, if you know what's good for you" she half-heartedly threatened, with that smile he loved. "I know better than anyone to make you angry" he said with a chuckle. "Except for Snotlout" he muttered under his breath, earning a giggle from her. "Yeah, when will he learn that I'm with you?" she asked, getting ready for the inevitable. "Never" Hiccup answered and the both of them locked lips with each other.

Her lips were incredibly soft to the touch, so warm, so caring; it's hard to believe that she's one of the toughest of Vikings on the island and yet be like this with Hiccup. She knew Hiccup opened a completely new view on the world for her through his eyes. That first magical ride on Toothless in the night was the moment her true feelings for Hiccup were revealed. She saw that he wasn't a scrawny, weak Viking; actually he could be the strongest of them because he uses his mind over strength, he doesn't want to push people around, show people he's boss, he's just not like that.

After what seemed like an hour, the both of them disengaged from the kiss and he stared into her blue eyes, while she stared into his green. "We better go, otherwise my dad will release the wrath of Thor" Hiccup said. Astrid just rolled her eyes and got up, pulling Hiccup with her. "Coming to see me off?" he asked, getting on Toothless and seeing Astrid already on Stormfly.

"Really, your what kind of girlfriend would I be if I didn't see my boyfriend off?" she asked. "Come on, let's go" he said and the two took off towards the docks.

The Docks

"It's almost time to go" Stoick said as he waited near the gangplank. "Where's Hiccup?" he asked, starting to get annoyed with his son. "Don't get your beard in a twist Stoick, he's over there saying goodbye to his friends and Astrid" Gobber said, pointing with his hook. Stoick looked to on top of the cliff, the same place where Hiccup stood as he prepared to leave with Toothless to find the Dragon's Nest.

"Goodbye guys" Hiccup said as he went through hugs. "See yah Hiccup, be ready to be a man" Snotlout said, giving his friend a handshake and hug. "Learn all you can Hiccup and tell me all about it when you come back" Fishlegs said, incredibly sad to his friend leave for Odin knows how long. "Bye Hiccup, have a good time" Ruff and Tuff both said as they hugged him.

All who was left was Astrid. "Astrid Iâ€¦" Hiccup started but stopped as Astrid did something he didn't expect. "OW!" he yelled as Astrid punched him in his arm. "What was that for?" he asked, still holding his arm. She really had a good punch. "I won't be able to do that for some time, and this is for the journey" she said and grabbed his shirt and gave him a passionate kiss, also earning 'ooooos' from the group.

When she pulled back from the kiss, Hiccup pulled her into a tight hug, Astrid holding him in an even tighter grip. "I'll see you soon" he whispered in her ear. The two of them knew it might be a while before they saw each other any time soon, but they were trying to comfort each other the best they could. "Counting on it" she whispered back. They both pulled back and stared into each other's eyes while holding hands.

"Time to go son" Stoick yelled from the docks. "Bye" Hiccup said quietly as he let go of her hands and took off to the docks to see off his dad before he left. "Too bad you're not coming dad" he said as Stoick hugged his son. "I know, but Ripper will look out for me" he said. "Don't worry sir, I'll make sure Hiccup doesn't get into any trouble" he said, knowing what he was in for.

Ripper was about a year older than Hiccup, who was now 17. The two of them knew each other well enough. "That'll be a twenty-four hour job right?" Hiccup asked. "I know, it'll be a challenge" he said with a smile and boarded the ship.

"Well this is it" Hiccup said to his dad. "Be careful son, and always know, I couldn't have asked for a better son" Stoick said with his hand on Hiccup's shoulder. "Oh no you do, you just didn't get him" Hiccup said jokingly, also earning a laugh from his dad. "Come on Hiccup" Ripper yelled from the deck. "Coming. Bye dad" Hiccup said and got on the ship, with Toothless already waiting on board for him.

As the ship was leaving, Hiccup saw Astrid on the same cliff where they were 6 months ago. She waved after him, and he returned it with a smile. Stormfly was behind her rider all the time, also sad that Toothless would be gone for who knows how long.

"So you ready to be leader?" Ripper asked as he came by Hiccup's side and also looked to see Astrid waving after him. "I don't knowâ€¦I guess" he simply stated. "Come on, where's the enthusiasm, we're

going on an adventure. Who knows what lies for us: pirates, training with some of the best warriors, it'll be quite something" Ripper said, trying to liven Hiccup's mood. "You're right, besides, I bet Astrid would love a new buff Hiccup" he said with a wink and walked away to adjust the mast.

Hiccup blushed under the last comment and looked to the cliff to still see Astrid looking at him. The two of them didn't take their eyes off each other until they were both out of sight for each other.

****A/N: This is my first story for HTTYD so tell me what you guys think of it and please review. ****

2. Coming Home

One and a half years later

The same ship that departed the docks of Berk was on its way home againâ€|after a long one and a half years. That was the uncertainty of this adventure. Nobody knew how long it would take for the chief's son to learn all the traits of being a chief, as well as learning how to handle weapons he had built himself. The atmosphere on the ship was that of relief, happiness, anxiety, and just the overwhelming feeling of returning to Berk for the few Vikings who had left on that journey.

A nineteen year old Viking was leaning on the railing of the bow of the ship, with a dragon as black as the night sky on a cold winter's night by his side. The dragon had its dark black eyes fixated on his rider who was waiting for that moment where Berk would finally be in sight, after one and a half years of being away from home. It would be a welcome sight after the continuous training with swords, axes, archery and by now knew everything about leadership. The time taken for his training had also done much change to his body.

His brown hair had grown a bit longer, he was still thin but under his clothes, the flesh on his bones were all muscle and a little fat, but mostly muscle which were well defined when he had his shirt removed. He even had a few scars, mostly from Ripper who didn't take it easy on him in sparringâ€|when Hiccup could fight properly with a sword or axe. Toothless had also done some growing up ever since they left. The dragon had grown another eight feet in length and put on another one hundred pounds, but still had his relatively thin figure for a dragon.

It wasn't smooth for the dragon at first when they docked at Atlaka, where the Vikings still hunted dragons, but when Hiccup told them about what they had accomplished back on Berk, they were just speechless and at first didn't believe him. But then again, how did someone like Hiccup have a Night Fury following him around like a puppy. Ever since then, other than training, Hiccup was helping the other Vikings to let go of their hate of dragons and learn to live beside them peacefully.

"You're gonna be there a long time Hiccup, we're still a days' journey away from Berk" a familiar voice called behind him. Hiccup turned to see, his now best friend, Ripper walking up to him. Ripper had been by Hiccup's side for the whole time of his training. He had

been his sparring partner, a mentor as well, in small ways, someone to hold him up when he fell down and he never gave up on Hiccup. Ripper showed the exact qualities that Hiccup learned he needed in a second-in-command and Ripper was never the jealous type.

Normally someone like Ripper, a perfect fighter, handsome, brave, strong—and so on, would have been upset in protecting Hiccup as in their eyes, they would have seen Hiccup as a weakling, not worth their time and would have done anything to get rid of them. Ripper knew where his place was, but never argued about it. He accepted it and saw there was no reason fret over it as there was no point, plus, he wasn't that kind of person.

"I can't help it if I'm excited Rip" Hiccup responded turning around back to the railing, still keeping an eye on the horizon. "Excited to see yah girlfriend aye?" Rip asked as he leaned his back on the railing looking at Hiccup and started petting Toothless' head.

"By Viking customs, I still haven't 'claimed' her as my girlfriend Rip, so by the law, she's still single" Hiccup said, thinking if Astrid might have moved on, because of the long time they had been apart. He was knocked out of his thoughts by a hard slap on the back. "Have more faith in her Hiccup. She's one of the smartest, most beautiful and strongest Vikings on Berk, she knows better than to go off with someone. She has feelings for you, even though you two aren't an official couple, people know you have it in for each other" Ripped lectured to his friend. It was true, before Hiccup left, he and Astrid refrained themselves from showing any close affection in public, but it was plain to almost everyone in Berk.

"Yeah—but that still won't stop some of the other young Vikings going after her" Hiccup said, once again, not taking his eyes off the horizon. "Look, you've gained a lot over the past year to two, I'm gonna tell you one thing to lose—that pessimistic attitude of yours. It won't do you any good" Ripper said and left to check on how the crew were doing.

Hiccup turned to look at his dragon who was still staring at him with those big black eyes with the green emerald outline. "Excited to be back bud?" he asked to which he got a grunt and one of his toothless smiles from Toothless. "Me too bud" he said while he started to rub under his neck, careful not to hit the spot where it automatically knocked out dragons. _I wonder how Astrid's doing_ he thought looking back out into the horizon.

Village of Berk

Stoick couldn't wait for the return of his son. He knew he would miss him, but not this much. Ever since he left, the house seemed empty without his son being in his room, no rumbling in the house, indicating Toothless wasn't there as well. He was at Gobber's dragon care hut, talking about his son's return.

"I can't believe he's coming back Gobber" he said—for the 50th time that day—to him alone. "Yes, you've told me already" his friend said, working on sharpening the teeth of a Monstrous Nightmare, more specifically, Snotlout's dragon. "I wonder how much he has changed" the big Viking said while walking about. "Or hasn't changed" Gobber said with a deep chuckle, earning a semi-annoyed look from his friend.

"Come on Stoick, he may be chief in some time, but he'll still be my little, scrawny apprentice who I tease every day" Gobber said as he closed Hookfang's mouth. "Ye good to go Hook" Gobber petted the head of the large dragon and he went lumbering off to find Snotlout. "But imagine what almost 2 years of training did to Hiccup, and I know Ripper made sure Hiccup did his training" Stoick said, just getting goose-bumps in seeing his son looking like a real Viking.

"Other than Hiccup learning to become a chief, you know about the other big issue, aye Stoick?" he asked his close friend. Stoick thought for a second and then it hit him, "Freiya's Day" he said. "Aye, and I bet who he'll ask to the ball" Gobber said, winking his eye. Freiya's Day is a new holiday that Stoick had made to honour his son for his victory against the Red Death and many other accomplishments made ever since the Dragon Academy was opened. It was held every 2 months on the first Friday of the month.

"Think she'll choose him?" Gobber asked, putting away his mouth cleaning equipment. "We both know that they have feelings for each other Gobber, they're bound to choose each other" Stoick said, having confidence in his son, and his possible future daughter-in-law. "Well then, I'm sure you're not worried about the large competition of young men asking her hand for the ball or even trying to get her to like them" Gobber stated, as a matter of fact. "Yes, I do know, and all the injuries they've sustained when Astrid felt she hadn't made it clear enough for them" Stoick said, recollecting all the harsh bruises inâ€|certain placesâ€|she gave them.

"I still don't know how Hiccup survives against her, or what does she see in him" Gobber said, still finding it hard to believe what Astrid sees in Hiccup. "By the way, where are Astrid and the rest of them?" Stoick asked, noticing the young dragon riders are nowhere to be found.

Cliffs of Berk

"Come on guys, is that all you got?!" Astrid yelled from ahead on Stormfly. The five dragon trainers were taking an off-day, and decided to spend it having a race around the entire island. "Be careful what you wish for Astrid" Snotlout said catching up with her. Ruff and Tuff were not far behind, with Fishlegs doing remarkably well on Meatlug, managing to keep up with the leaner, faster dragons.

The group were heading back into the mainland and through the forest. "Maybe you should watch where you're flying" Astrid shot back, noticing Hookfang's line of flight was going to take him straight into a tree. "Enough tricks Astrid, you've fooled me one too MANYâ€|!" he yelled as Hookfang suddenly stopped and sent Snotlout flying into a tree. "Ow" was all Snotlout could muster. Astrid and the rest of them flew by within seconds.

"I tried to warn him" Astrid said with a grin as she widened the gap between herself and the others. From then on, it was a clear run for Astrid who arrived at the Dragon Academy which was the finish line for the race. "Another win Stormfly, that's number 110 for us" she said as she got off her blue dragon who nudged her rider with her head and she gladly rubbed it.

Soon, the others also landed in the arena, with Snotlout coming in last place, but with two small branches up his nose, leaves in his hair, and a very smug dragon, who if was human, would be laughing. "That's a good look for you Snotlout" Astrid remarked at her friend's new facial features. "Glad you like it. I'm trying to work it in now" he said, thinking she was serious, or trying to be funny. Astrid simply rolled her eyes, annoyed that Snotlout never let his crush go.

"That was another great race guys" she said as she went up to the group. "The Dragon Academy has done well ever since it was made, we have fifty trained riders and forty more still in the process. Hiccup will be really impressed when he comes tomorrow" Fishlegs said, recapping all the achievements the Academy has had, and anxious for the head of the Academy to arrive.

"Yeah, I wonder how much the old twig has changed" Snotlout remarked. "Wonder if he's still the same scrawny Hiccup" he finished. "Jealous of competition Snotlout?" Ruff asked with a smug. "What, pffâ€¦of Hiccupâ€¦no way, why would I be scared of him, when I've got all this" he said flexing his muscles. "All the girls fall for this" gesturing to his muscles and his face. "Then why is Astrid dating Hiccup?" Tuffnut asked, completely destroying all credibility of Snotlout's comments.

"Guys, we're not an official couple, ok?" Astrid said, she never really liked discussing about her relationship with Hiccup with her friends, especially the guys. The only real person she felt comfortable discussing this with was Ruffnut since she was a girl, and one of Astrid's close friend. "Yeah, they're not an official couple, which means Astrid's still openâ€¦" Snotlout didn't get to finish as he got one of Astrid's deadly right hooks.

"Snotlout, I'm not a trophy to be won, and I'm waiting till Hiccup comes back" she said, standing over him, making sure she made her point. "S-sorry Astridâ€¦of course you're not a trophyâ€¦I was just trying toâ€¦" he looked over at Fishlegs and Tuffnut for backup. "Uhâ€¦well you don't have to wait long, he's coming tomorrow" Fishlegs mentioned quickly to draw attention away from Snotlout. "What?" this caught Astrid off guard. "He's coming tomorrow?" she asked again. When she thought about it for a second, she didn't ask when Hiccup was coming back, just knew he was coming back.

"Yeah, Stoick apparently received a letter from Johann which was from Hiccup about five days ago" Tuffnut explained. "The letter said he'll be here tomorrow, three days before the ball" Fishlegs said.

This was huge news to Astrid. After one and a half years she'll be seeing Hiccup again. She could hardly imagine how much he has changed, but she would get to see that tomorrow. "Oooh, Astrid can't wait for her boyfriend to come back" Ruffnut teased her best friend. Ever since Hiccup left, Astrid and Ruffnut have become really close. "Ughâ€¦he's not my boyfriend!" she yelled, trying at the same time to suppress a blush, which she was losing quickly.

"It's getting late guys, I'm heading back home" Astrid said and quickly got on Stormfly and flew out of the arena towards home. "Was Astrid just blushing?" Tuffnut asked the others as they saw her fly off.

Astrid dropped Stormfly at her shed for the night, said goodnight and began walking towards her house. Honestly, she was pretty excited that Hiccup was coming back. The day they spent together before he left was the only real day where they showed their real feelings towards each other openly.

She reached her house in no time, and as you exit the house, there's a perfect view of the sea and the route where ships normally come. She looked at the sea, seeing it shine its nightly glimmer, knowing tomorrow is the day she sees the ship that she saw sail over the horizon one and a half years ago. "Goodnight Hiccup" she said quietly before retiring for the night.

3. One Day Left

Hiccup barely got a wink of sleep that night. He had been up watching the stars with Toothless, dreaming of how it would be when he got back. He smiled to himself thinking the reactions on his friend's faces seeing how much he has changed in the time he was gone. At the same time, he wondered how much they have changed.

"You know Toothless, when you think about itâ€¦it feels like it was just yesterday we left" he said to his close friend, who had been by his side that fateful day. Toothless made a friendly growl in agreement with his rider, and then one of his signature smiles when Hiccup looked at him. "I bet your excited too eh bud?" he asked rubbing Toothless' head. "Being back homeâ€¦seeing your friends, catching up with themâ€¦making out with your girlfriend_" he heard an all too familiar voice say behind him.

"Wowâ€¦you can't give a guy any privacyâ€¦can you?" Hiccup said turning to see Ripper lying comfortably on the railing of the ship with a mug of mead in his hand. "How long have you been there?" he asked again. Ripper had this talent of being in specific place without anyone knowing until he says something. "Long enough. You know, you should really learn to think your thoughts instead of passing them through Toothless" he said walking up to join them.

"Are you still worried about how she'll react when she sees you? Come on Hicâ€¦you've changedâ€¦a lotâ€¦and I mean a lotâ€¦" Ripper said, remembering what Hiccup used to look like. "Made your point" Hiccup said, keeping his cool with his best friend, but he wasn't done there. "And I mean incrediblyâ€¦sometimes I think you're not the real Hiccup" Ripper finally finished. He just loved teasing Hiccup. "Are you done?" Hiccup plainly asked, not amused at all by the teasing.

"Hey, at least I don't go overboard with the teasing like Snotlout does" Rip said in his defense. Ever since Hiccup was five Snotlout had been bullying him and making him feel less of himself than he already was. And it never stopped 11 years later. "Well at least when you get back you can show him who's boss" Ripper said, wanting to see Snotlout put in his place in the Academy. "I'm not that kind of guy Rip. Sure Snotlout is brash, arrogant, over-confident, but he's still my cousin and I have to treat him like family" Hiccup said.

Snotlout had been a pain in his side for many years, and the Thawfest festival was the only chance for him to show Snotlout who's boss. He

saw that he was becoming another Snotlout, showing him up, bragging and picking on him during the festival during the dragon competitions. But in the end, he saw how much the games meant to Snotlout, and threw the final race away. Sure he didn't win the Thawfest games for the first time, but earned a kiss from Astrid, for being wellâ€¦himselfâ€¦not a bully.

"Personally, someone should stick it to him someday, in my opinion" Ripper said. "Someone yes, but not me Rip, I could never do that to anyone" Hiccup said. It was evident to almost everyone, that Hiccup would never purposefully harm or bully someone out of revenge. He was never that kind of person. "Anyway, what do you think Astrid's going to do to you when we get back?" Ripper asked.

Hiccup face-palmed himself and groaned. _I forgot about her_ he thought. He told her one and a half years ago that he'd be back as soon as possible. "Clearly one and a half years was too long" he said aloud, but meant for himself. "Oden better prepare room for you lad, you'll be on your way to Valhalla a little sooner than thought" Ripper said, patting Hiccup on your back. Hiccup just smiled sheepishly. "You think she won't go for over-kill will she?" he asked.

Ripper just gave him a blank stare. "You're kidding right? Dude, you'll be lucky if she throws you off a cliff" Ripper said. "Yep, that's my Astrid for yah. Lucky me" he said, thinking on how Astrid will react when she sees him. "I'll leave that to you to worry about" Ripper said. Honestly, he loved to see those kind of situations between Hiccup and Astrid. It kept things interesting on Berk, but sometimes he feared for his friend since all Hel would break loose when you have an angry Astrid on you.

"Other than running from a Hofferson, what do you plan to do for Freiya's Day?" Ripper asked. The previous Freiya Days were no big deal since they always went as a group. But Hiccup had now reached a stage in his life where he had to pick a partner who would remain with him for the rest of his life, since he was of age, and the girl he picks for the upcoming event will leave an impression. Well there was no doubt that he would want Astrid. The girl he had a crush on for over a decade, and who knew she'd end up with himâ€¦not officially anyway.

How her brightly her golden hair shown in the sunlight, her slim figure, blue eyes, fare skinâ€¦oh Oden, she was perfection in his eyes. Ever since the defeat of the Green Death, Astrid saw something in Hiccup that she didn't see in most Viking boys, plus since he wasâ€¦differentâ€¦it just made her more curious. Hiccup knew trying to win Astrid over again was not going to be easy, since he knew she'd make it almost impossibleâ€¦almost.

"I don't knowâ€¦probably something stupid, like asking Astrid for that" he stated simply. "It's your funeral, what kind of casket do you want, we offer a wide variety" Ripper said jokingly, earning a punch from Hiccup in the shoulder. He wanted to change the subject quickly, so they began talking about the story of another Viking group that did have dragons.

"They said that not too long ago, a settlement to the east, about 200 miles from Berk, had also discovered dragons, but they were able to train them into obeying their every command" Ripper said, from what a

few Vikings in Atlaka said. "Their colony is known as the Dragon Clan nowadays because of the close ties they have with their dragons. "Sounds like a nice place to visit, I'd like to learn how they were able to train their dragons" Hiccup said, truly intrigued about that place.

"Their village is called Stofferson and the village leader is someone called Daedra, who used to be a dragon warrior like most of us but changed when he found out he could train them. There have been so many legends and myths about him that's it's hard to say which is true" Ripper continued. "What about his dragon?" Hiccup asked. Ripper gave a smile that told Hiccup he would find it interesting.

"They say his dragon was as black as night, the offspring of lightning and death itself, only attacked during night and nobody ever saw it" Ripper said. "Another Night Fury?" Hiccup asked, not believing that there was another Night Fury out there. "Yep, many tales about him, but most know about his dragon. He's greatly respected by everyone but no one has heard of their village in 10 years" Ripper said. The colony of Stofferson had gone silent in the past decade and no one knew why, and weren't able to find out, since their village had difficult accessibility for anyone who travelled by boat. The only way they could get supplies was that one of their own knew the way in and out of the treacherous waterways that led to the village.

The moon was now at its highest position in the crystal black sky, signaling it was midnight and it would be only another five to six hours until the sun came out. "We better get to bed Hiccup. Want to save all that energy for the welcoming committee" Ripper said, gesturing below decks, where their living quarters were. "You go on ahead Rip, I'll catch up" Hiccup replied. He felt didn't feel like going to sleep just yet.

"Suit yourself Hic, goodnight" and with that Ripper went below decks to catch up on some much needed shut-eye. Once he was gone, Hiccup retreated his thoughts to what was in his pocket. He stuck in his hand inside and pulled out an object that was wrapped in a dark-coloured cloth. When Hiccup removed the cloth, it revealed a small gold nugget, about the size of a cork on a bottle of mead, and a small diamond next to it. He then took out his journal, something he always kept by him at all times, and took his pencil and started sketching a design, clearly linked to the gold nugget and the diamond.

"It will take me some time, but I hope she likes it in the end" Hiccup said to himself with a smile. And with that, he followed Ripper's trail below decks to get some needed rest, to prepare for tomorrow.

4. Finally Back Home

It was another calm day on the seas surrounding Berk, which means the awaited ship will arrive at a quicker pace. But that was still to wait. It was still dark as night for early hours in the morning, but that a ray of light began peaking over the horizon, signaling the dawn of a new day. Little by little, more rays began piercing the dark sky, the sun spreading its warmth for the people of Berk, given it was zero degrees out. Such weather as this couldn't be more

perfect for the return of the Chief's son Hiccup Haddock who had been away for almost one and a half years, exploring the Viking cities, honing his warrior skills and gaining valuable knowledge along his journey. Finally all that would be coming to an end once he reaches the shores of Berk.

Below Deck

Toothless had an early start to the day, and was on the top deck, waiting for the other Vikings and his rider and best friend, Hiccup, to wake up. He waited for what felt like hours but soon the deck was filled activity, and all in preparation for when they docked. These were the same Vikings who also left Berk with Hiccup and Ripper to Atlatka for Hiccup's training. Stoick had assigned them for Hiccup's protection but in truth they felt like it was a vacation. Hiccup surprisingly didn't cause any 'accidents' on the trip thereâ€|wellâ€|none that put the whole ship at risk anyway. And in Atlatka, Hiccup was Ripper's responsibility so they had it relatively easy. But they were sure glad to be home, back to their wives and children for some catching up.

Toothless had yet to see his master come up, but when he saw Ripper gesture to down below when he came up, Toothless knew he had to wake Hiccup. With two quick jumps, careful not to hurt or disrupt anyone from their tasks, Toothless was below deck, which he was able to squeeze through.

Hiccup should have listened to Ripper's advice about getting an early sleep. He was too groggy to move a muscle and the sun shining through the round window didn't help either. "Is it morning already?" he grumbled to himself and pulled the fur cover over his head to make a temporary dark world for him to sleep. He was only able to enjoy a few seconds of his 'extra' sleep before he heard the playful growling of his dragon, and by the sound of it, Toothless was right on top of him. "Come on bud, just five more minutes" Hiccup said without removing the cover from his head.

Toothless made a huff in disagreement and pulled the cover off of Hiccup, who was immediately blinded by the sunlight penetrating his room. "Toothless!" he yelled but only to see the dragon holding the cover in his mouth and those big eyes, which made him look almost adorable. Hiccup just smiled at his dragon's playfulness. "Ok, I'm up" he said as he grabbed his prosthetic leg and fixed it on. He got up slowly, his dragon watching him closely in case something happened. He put on his coat, fixed his belt which now had a place for a sword, he put on his boots. Toothless was getting impatient and made it evident with slight growls and gestures to the main deck. "Go ahead bud, I'll catch up" Hiccup said, with which Toothless gladly responded and darted upwards, leaving a small path of destruction in his wake.

Hiccup just chuckled to himself. For a 25 foot long, one of the world's most dangerous dragons, he seemed like a puppy. Within the next few seconds Hiccup was above deck to be greeted by preparations for when they dock at Berk. "Glad to see you're finally up" Ripper said nice and loudly, excitement evident in his voice to be coming back home. "Well I wouldn't miss this day for anything in the world" Hiccup said, matching Ripper's enthusiasmâ€|to lesser extent. There was a strong breeze towards the island, the masts had full sails to gain every speed they could. "Berk should be within sight within the

next few minutes, prepare to see your girlfriend" Ripper teased.

"That is if she doesn't kill me" Hiccup said jokingly, but still hoping she didn't kill him for obvious reasons. "So what's the first thing you're gonna do once we get back?" Hiccup asked, trying to strike up a conversation until Berk was in sight. "First I'm gonna run off the ship and kiss the ground and thank Oden for being back, second I'd like to get a good jug of mead and third watch Astrid throw you off a cliff or something" Ripper said. "You are never gonna let me hear the end of it aren't you?" Hiccup asked. That whole business of Astrid killing him was getting on his nerves.

"Don't lose your prosthetic Hic, she won't kill youâ€¦injure you for sureâ€¦but not kill ya" Ripper said. He knew Astrid wouldn't kill him but injuring him was definitely on the plate. "Great" Hiccup said, not too thrilled by what Ripper is suggesting. "Look, don't worry about that now, we're not evenâ€¦_BERK IN SIGHT!_" they heard the foreman yell. When they looked to port they saw the towering semi-mountain of Berk. "Scratch that. Better think of something fast" Ripper said before going to help steer the ship.

Berk

It was another usual day at the Berk Dragon Academy. Today's class was composed of children no older than nine. For them it was more demonstrations and lessons about the dragons instead of riding them and experiencing it first-hand. That was only possible when they reached the age of ten. "Today's class was about general facts about the dragons. All the five riders were there for today's class with 20 students.

"So class, today we are going to learn about the dragons' weaknesses and strengths" Astrid said, standing in front of the young bunch with Stormfly beside her and the other four riders and their dragons with them behind her. "So what can anyone tell me about the Deadly Nadder?" she asked. "Ooh, it loves to groom itself" a young girl said, noticing Stormfly tending to something under her wing. "Good, anything else?" Astrid asked. "They are extremely loyal to their rider" a young boy said. "Excellent. Going in further to that they will do anything to protect their riderâ€¦" she said but was cut off. "You know Astrid, I would also do anything to protect you" Snotlout said putting his arm around Astrid's shoulders.

"Class this would be a good demonstration. Stormfly!" Astrid called, and as soon as she said that Stormfly let loose her spikes at Snotlout who was smacked against the wall of the arena. "What was that for?" he asked, not able to pull out the spikes which had his clothes impaled to the wall. "I was just demonstrating to the class what a Nadder does when it feels its master is threatened" she said with a smug smile, while most of the students laughed at Snotlout. "Too bad she missed his body" Tuffnut said. "Yeah, that would have been a real mess" his twin Ruffnut said. Those twins didn't really mean it but they were always bent on seeing and causing trouble. But Snotlout wasn't going to let it end there. "Hookfang, show what happens when you mess with the rider of a Monstrous Nightmare" he yelled back, and just as his dragon was about to send a fireball at Stormflyâ€¦

"Enough Snotlout, that was just a demonstration" Stoick said coming

into the arena with Gobber behind him. "Ok ya lil' younglings, time to scamper off back home" he said and the children soon left after saying their thanks to Astrid and goodbyes to the Chief. "How was today's lesson Astrid?" Stoick asked after everyone had left. "It was productive, they also got a few rides around the arena on the dragons, so they can get a sense of dragons they would want in the future" she explained. "I just wanted to say what an excellent job all of you are doing. Hadn't been easy when Hiccup left but all of you have brought this Academy to its heights" the Chief said, praising them for their work.

"Thanks a lot Chief, now can someone get me down from here" Snotlout asked who was still hanging on the wall. "It can wait Snot" Astrid replied, enjoying this. "So why are you here sir?" Fishlegs asked. "Well I wanted to come by and tell the Academy's old head master will be returning today" he said with a smile. "Hiccup's coming BACK!" they all yelled with smiles except for Snotlout. "Yes! Finally we get to see him again. I can't wait to hear about his journey, what he found, especially what he learned ooh, if he brought any samples" Fishlegs said with joy.

"Great, better say bye to the peace and quiet here" Snotlout said, not excited at all that his cousin is coming back. "What's the matter Snot, afraid of competition?" Tuffnut asked, also glancing at Astrid who was speaking with the Chief and not aware of their conversation. "Pff are you kidding me, that fish bone that's completely not true" Snotlout said, doubtful his cousin could pull off anything with the girls on Berk especially Astrid even though she preferred Hiccup over the rest of the guys. "Anyway, what do you think they're talking about?" Fishlegs asked, as Astrid and Stoick continued their conversation. "Probably marriage with Hiccup" Tuff said earning a punch from Snotlout. "Not funny" he stated simply.

"Well guys I have something for us to do" Astrid said coming up to the group. "And what is that?" Ruff asked. "You all will be flying your dragons in a formation for welcoming the ship back and guide it in" Astrid explained. "Wait, there's no plan or anything?" Fishlegs asked. "It's just basically flying with the ship and guiding it in to Berk, simple as that" Astrid said. "Then why aren't you flying with us?" Snotlout asked, which everyone wanted to know. "Because Stoick needs me to do something right now and I won't make it in time ok?" she said, making it clear that she wasn't going to be there and this had to be done well.

"Ok Astrid, we'll get right on it" Snotlout said with a smile, but hoping to get some sort of reward and was gesturing to a hug. "Gotta go, bye guys" Astrid said as she got on her dragon and flew away. But as soon as she was out, she gave herself a pat on the back for that performance. Not the part of guiding the ship in but why she couldn't go with it. She didn't want to see Hiccup that soon because she was in truth, extremely mad at him and wanted to do something dreadful to him. But at the same time she was glad he was back only that she could throw him off a cliff anyway. "Be back as soon possible, yeah right Hiccup" she said, but her thoughts were interrupted when "SHIP ON THE HORIZON!" she heard below and when she looked she saw the same ship that left the docks one and a half years ago. "Prepare yourself Hiccup" she said and flew to her house.

Back On the Ship

Hiccup couldn't believe it. One and a half years later he was returning back home. Every second that went by of him staring at the island seemed like an eternity. He yearned to get back on his home turf. But he needn't have to worry as the island grew bigger and bigger, indicating they were getting closer and closer. Not much had changed, the buildings were the same, the sky behind was beginning to form dark grey clouds, which was meant for the season of winter on this island.

He focused his attention on the docks, where he saw a crowd of people beginning to gather. He turned to Toothless who was now by his side, also excited of being back. "Well bud, we're finally home" he said petting his Toothless' snout. Just then they heard the familiar roars of dragons above, and when Hiccup looked up saw Hookfang, Barf and Belch, and Meatlug flying in circles above them.

"Welcome Back Hiccup!" Fishlegs yelled from above. "Finally came back did ya?" Tuff said. Hiccup just chuckled at seeing his friends again. He would get a better look at them once they dock. "Welcome back fishbone" Snotlout said. Hiccup just gave an annoyed smile. His cousin was never going to change. Just to speed things up, some of the men on the ship tossed an end of rope to the dragons so that they could pull them faster back to shore. With the three dragons both pulling the ship, they reached shore within a few seconds.

"Make way, make way for the crew!" Stoick bellowed as the gangplank from the ship touched the docks. The men from the crew rushed over with their belongings into the arms of their families, with tears of joy. Ripper was the next to come off with his sack. Like he said as he got off he kissed the dock from where they had set off and thanked Oden for returning. "Ripper!" Stoick yelled as he gave him a death hug. "Niceâ€|t-toâ€|see youâ€|tooâ€|s-sir" he said through Stoick's grip, and he was losing consciousness as well. Stoick realized what he was doing and quickly let go of the young lad. Ripper gasped for breath as soon he was let go. "Soâ€|where's my son?" Stoick asked looking at the ship.

"Should be on his way" he said, still recovering from the lack of air. Then they heard 'oohs' and 'wows' coming in front of them and when Stoick looked up he couldn't believe his eyes. There stood his son, who was now 18 years of age now. He looked nothing like he did one and a half years ago. He grown taller, at least two to three inches, he was still thin anyone could tell by his shirt that he had toned arms, his hair had grown a bit longer and he had some facial hair. Boy did Stoick and his son have some catching up to do.

The crowd swarmed Hiccup, just like when he was number one in dragon training. All of them were amazed at how much Hiccup had changed. "Hiccup!" he heard someone yell his name and didn't have to look before he was taken in a massive bear hug, enough to literally squeeze the life out of you. "Dad" Hiccup managed to squeeze out. "Nice to see you again son" Stoick said, finally letting him go. Stoick hardly ever showed this kind of emotion in public but he was seeing his son after all. "Oh dad, it's so good to be back" Hiccup said, slinging his sack over his shoulder.

"How much have you changed. I'm not even sure you're the real Hiccup" he said. "Yeah well I've been getting that a lot" Hiccup replied. "And there's the old lizard" Stoick said seeing Toothless come up to them. "My you two have grown quite a lot. How does it feel to be back

in Berk?" Stoick asked. "It feels great dad, but I'd like to see my friends before I can really catch up with you" Hiccup said, hoping that he didn't offend his father.

"Not at all son, I'm just glad you're back. But make sure to say hi to Gobber alright?" his father asked. He knew as well that Gobber was like a second father to Hiccup and he was his mentor after all and was his assistant in the forge. "Why would I want to miss more teasing from Gobber dad?" Hiccup asked with his semi-amused tone and a play along smile. Stoick smiled at his son's sarcasm and left to attend his chief duties. Soon after his dad left Hiccup was swarmed by his old friends.

"Nice to see you again Hiccup" Fishlegs said giving him big hug. "Hey Fishlegs, how's the academy, found any new dragons or new behaviors?" Hiccup asked, knowing how much Fishlegs enjoyed facts and learning new things about dragons. "Getting there, haven't been many new dragons since that Whispering Death that showed up" he said. "So Hiccup plunder any villages, fought any pirates, any new kinds of destruction?" the twins asked. "Pirates yes, plundering no, and no destruction" Hiccup answered. "But by the looks of it you guys haven't been busy or lost your touch" Hiccup said gesturing around to the peaceful village. "I told you we were losing our edge" Ruffnut said hitting Tuff in the face. "Hey don't look at me, you're the one who comes up with the ideas" he said rubbing his nose.

Hiccup laughed at seeing the two twins going at each other again. Nothing much had changed. "You are definitely not Hiccup" he heard an all too familiar voice behind him. "Hey Snotlout" he said turning around to see his bully of a cousin. "How you've been?" he asked, trying to make small talk. "Well everything was going great until today" he said but it was hard to say if it was a joking tone or a serious or in between. "Listen Snotlout" Hiccup started but was interrupted. "No Hiccup, you listen to me! even though you're different physically you'll still be the same scrawny fishbone Viking you always were and I'll keep beating you at everything" Snotlout said with a smug face. "Ok Snotlout you made your point you're better than me" Hiccup said, not liking where this was going.

"Actually just to prove it!" Snotlout went through a full hook with his right hand but it stopped. He looked up to see Hiccup holding his fist in his hand. He had blocked it with ease! Hiccup did not have an amused expression on his face. It was more of a look of disappointment. After seeing the shocked face of his cousin he let go of his fist which had a hand mark around it. "Why can't you let that go Snotlout, we're cousins" Hiccup said. Snotlout completely ignored what happened earlier and trudged off followed by Hookfang. "Looks like you really did grow up Hiccup" Fishlegs said.

"I just hope Snotlout moves past this rivalry" Hiccup said, truly worried about his cousin. It then occurred to him that he had seen everyone except for Astrid. "Guys, have you seen Astrid?" he asked. They all glanced at each other and shook their heads. "She told us that Stoick had her do something, whatever that is" Tuff said. "Well I'm gonna go look for her, it was nice seeing you guys, we have a lot of catching up to do" he yelled as he ran into the heart of the village, more specifically to the forge.

Village of Berk

Everything had settled down since their return and most of the crew were now walking with friends and family, surely telling tales of their adventure and life away from Berk, and all the new wonders and new people they met and saw. _After I find her I have to catch up with everyone_ Hiccup thought. As got closer to the forge, which at the same time was the medical station for dragons, Hiccup saw Gobber working on a Gronckle's teeth. "Well are ya gonna jus' stand there or help me boy" Gobber said without turning.

"Nah, I think I'll leave you to it" he said. "It's good to see you again Gobber, looks like Oden had taken it easy on you" Hiccup said, seeing Gobber didn't age much. "Yeah well when ye' are working on dragons every single day, it keeps ye' young" he said. Hiccup listened to Gobber's rambling about life while looking around the old forge. Nothing had changed at. Weapons were still in their usual places, except for the tools Gobber used. "But enough of me, I'd like to hear about you Hiccup" he said, snapping him out of his thoughts. "I'm sorry what?" Hiccup asked, ashamed that he hadn't been listening. Gobber just made a sly smile. "Thinking about someone are we?" he asked. Hiccup blushed a bit at this.

"If you want to know where she is I think she flew on Stormfly into the forest" he said, gesturing to the area of the cove. "Alright thanks Gobber. I'll tell you and dad everything at dinner" he said and went to find Toothless. "Oh that boy is in for it" Gobber said to himself seeing Hiccup run off.

Forest of Berk

Hiccup was now high above the sky on Toothless above the forest that surrounded Berk looking for Astrid. "Keep your eyes out for her bud" he said looking down trying to pick her out. But then when they were exactly over the cove he saw a Deadly Nadder with a young girl standing in front of the small lake. "Down bud" Hiccup said and within a few seconds they were on the ground with Hiccup quickly getting off and Toothless walking over to Stormfly who really wanted to get a nice seat for what was about to happen.

Astrid had heard them land and Hiccup walking to her, but his pace got slower and slower when she didn't turn around. Who would turn around when your supposed boyfriend ups and leaves you for one and a half years and saying 'I'll be back as soon as possible'. Hiccup had to make up for that time and she wouldn't make it easy for him.

"Hey A-Astrid. How have you been?" he asked walking to her ever so slowly, that now he was within an arm's length of her. That got Astrid's temper boiling. "Really, _how have you been_?" she mimicked his voice and right now facing him. "That's all you have to say for leaving me for one and a half _years_! she yelled. Hiccup was now on dangerous water. Nothing was more worse than a mad Hofferson.

"Astrid I'm sorry!" he didn't get to finish as he received a vicious right hook in the face from her. Hiccup fell to the ground with a loud thud, clearly in shock from what just happened. "Sorry isn't going to cut it with me Hiccup!" she yelled. He was now on his back on the ground and her standing over him. "I thought about you every single day since you were gone, and at least hoping for you write to me or something but no! I don't hear or see anything you've written to me and you come back here expecting me just to take you back!?"

she asked, thinking or knowing that's what he expected.

"Astrid, it's not what you think?" he said trying to get up but she kept him down. "Then what is it Hiccup, training, fun, adventureâ€¦\|what was it that you couldn't even write a small letter that at least said 'I love you' on it. Tell me" she said. She was right. Hiccup didn't even think of writing a letter back but he could bring up the excuse of training every single day, having classes that went for the entire day for each day of those one and a half years. But he knew better than to bring them up with Astrid. Or he would bring them up some other time when the fight was over.

"Well?!" she asked again, still not getting a response. Hiccup just looked down, knowing he was guilty and didn't answer back. Astrid sighed hopelessly. She took out her axe and dropped it on his groin and it bounced back up into her hand. This earned a huge groan from Hiccup and 'Why would you do that?'

"That was for not sending me a letter. And furthermore, know that I'm not saying a single word to you for leaving me" she said. She then hopped on Stormfly, who was next to Toothless and saw the whole thing unfold, and left.

Toothless walked up to his rider who was still holding his groin and on the ground. "Well I think I would have preferred if she threw me off a cliff" he said. But he was deeply sad and he knew this was his fault but he would explain his reasons later on because now he had to win her back and do it fast.

****A/N:** Hey guys, thanks to the readers who are reading this and please review also and it's just gonna get more intense from here on out.**

5. Hofferson Clan

****A/N:** Long time no see eh guys? Sorry but school has got me by the neck and is choking out my time for writing my stories but thank you for the readers who are sticking with this and I HAVE TROUBLE COMING WITH NAMES FOR CHARACTERS SO CAN YOU PM ME ABOUT NAMES, ANY GUYS OR GIRLS NAMES. Thank you! Mainly one for Astrid's dad who's named Aaron but with the names you've PM'd me with I can change it. Thank you**

Hiccup's return didn't go exactly according to plan. Right now he was on the ground, in pain, holding his groin. Astrid had first gave him one of her legendary right hooks, and when he was on the ground dropped her axe on his groin, and gave him an earful before leaving on Stormfly. "What am I going to do bud?" Hiccup asked, still lying on the ground. Toothless just made a suggestive growl in response to his rider's question. "Easy for you to say" Hiccup said with a chuckle as he regained his composure and stood up, still weary of what happened to him. Out of all the injuries he received while training, none of them compared to what Astrid did to him.

Hiccup soon hopped back on Toothless and the pair took off back to Berk.

Meanwhile with Astrid

"I can't believe the guts he had" she said to herself as she landed in the back of her house, where Stormfly's pen was. "Leaves for one and a half years and expects me to take him back? You need to start all over again Hiccup" she said, the anger still fresh in her mind towards her 'boyfriend'. She led Stormfly into her pen, which was more like a barn, and after setting up her food and making sure everything was alright, said goodnight to her, and walked inside.

"Astrid, where were you today?" her mom asked. Ingrid Hofferson, one of the best dragon fighters on Berk and one of the most respected, and the person Astrid got all her personalities from. She was like every other Berk woman, strong, loyal and protective of their child. She had long beautiful blonde hair like Astrid's and braided her hair just like Astrid. She had encouraged Astrid to take up dragon training when she was just a small girl and had in the last two years, noticed the feelings her daughter had towards the Haddock boy. She herself was amazed at the gift Hiccup had, and right now, was glad that she and Hiccup were together—that's what she thought at least.

"Oh, I wasâ€|around" she said simply walking past her mom who was washing the dishes, and keeping an eye on Astrid's younger brother, Riftide who was 10 years old. "Astrid" her mom said looking at her with that 'Tell me what really happened face'. "What, by around I meant, teaching at the academy and flying Stormfly around" she said, not bringing up the confrontation between her and Hiccup. "So you didn't punch Hiccup in the face?" she asked all of a sudden.

What, how in Oden's name did she find out about that!?! Astrid asked herself. "How did you know about that?" she asked quickly, but regretted it as soon as she saw her mom's face. Ingrid had that _I got you smile_ on her face. "Don't try to fool your mom Astrid. A mother knows her children very well, and since you're an exact copy of me when I was young, I know you the most of all" she explained. _"Sometimes I just hate how we're alike"_ Astrid thought. "Did you really punch Hiccup in the face?" she asked, knowing that her daughter did it but still surprised. "Well he deserved itâ€|for leaving me for one and a half years" Astrid shot back and this was a major point.

"I'll give you that dear, but for his defense he never knew how long his training would take, he could have been gone for much longer you know" she said, defending the Haddock boy. "Mom! You're supposed to be on my side, not defending him. You know he could have written me a letter, but no, he couldn't even do that, not even a simple line! He could have given that to Trader Johann to give me when he came. What kind of boyfriend does that!?" she asked, finally getting her problem off her shoulders.

"For the love Oden Astrid, not his fault you're high maintenance" Riftide said with a grin. He loved teasing his older sister, even though he knew very well what her temper was capable of. One day when he broke Astrid's axe, split in half, she literally chased him around the island three times. She would have killed him if Hiccup didn't fix Astrid's axe that same day. That was when Riftide was 7 and Hiccup and Astrid were both 15. Just when Astrid caught him, Hiccup came running and stopped Astrid from seriously injuring her brother. Hiccup had made a lot of changes to her axe that she liked. He made it of a lighter wood for the handle, a stronger metal for the blade,

a strap so that it wouldn't slip and engraved her initials on the blade. And he did all that in a day. Of course she was amazed at the craftsmanship but Hiccup said it was nothing. Riftide owes Hiccup his life for saving him that day.

"Zip it you little twerp, or do I have to do it for you?" Astrid threatened with her fist rolled into a ball in front of his face. "Shutting up now" he quickly said and turned back to the sharpening of his tiny wooden sword. "Enough you two, and Astrid I think you may have taken your anger a bit too far with Hiccup. Remember it's just his first day back here and you've already given him a mark on his face" she said. "Not to mention what I did to his groin" Astrid said under her breath, which her mother heardâ€|unfortunately.

"YOU DID WHAT TO HIS WHAT!?" she asked, fearing the worst. "Relax mom, it's not like I didn't cut it off or anything" Astrid said sitting down at the table, smiling to herself a bit. _I wouldn't go that far_ she thought. "Oh thank Freiya" her mother said putting her hand on her chest. For a moment there she thought she'd have to explain to Stoick what happened to his son. Luckily she wasn't carrying the pot of fish stew when Astrid said that, otherwise dinner would have to be prepared again.

"Astrid, I should be mad at you for doing that to Hiccup, but at the same time you did have a good reason, but the wrong kind of punishment" Ingrid said as she placed the pot on the table. "And dear could you help set the bowls and spoons" she asked as she went to get the bread. "Wrong punishment or not, he got it in the end and knows how I feel about him leaving" she said as she placed the bowls and spoons.

At that moment they heard the front door open and a huge bellow throughout the house. "How is everyone? Good I hope" the voice said. Astrid just smiled. It was her dad, Aaron Hofferson, another former dragon killer of Berk but has since turned towards diplomacy, and is one of Stoick's top 5 men. If diplomacy doesn't work, then it's the traditional way of getting things done.

"Dad!" Riftide yelled happily from his place. "Hey there ya little warrior he said rubbing his son's head. "So how are my two beautiful ladies?" he asked sitting down. He was always a joy to have around. He was a good father, disciplined his children when needed but they never went out of line and if they did, he never really shouted at them, just talked to them until they realized their mistake.

"Not bad dear, so what did Stoick want to talk about?" Ingrid asked placing a bowl of fish stew in front of him, with a kiss on the cheek. "Oh just the upcoming festival, all the decorations, food, games, that sort of stuff, and a way we can incorporate the dragons into it" he said. "You're gonna have the dragons in it?" Riftide asked, more like yelled with enthusiasm. "Yes they are, since they've become like family with us, they also deserve to be at the festivals. "That sounds great dad" Astrid said.

"Oh, you should be excited as well Astrid, Stoick wants you to help plan how the dragons can be incorporated into this festival" Aaron said. "He wants me to decide and plan how the dragons will be in this festival?" she asked, not believing it. "Well you and Hiccup" Aaron said, to which Astrid's heart almost dropped. "What's wrong girl, looks like you've seen a Whispering Death?" he asked, seeing his

daughter's expression. Ingrid also noticed this and spoke when Astrid still didn't open her mouth.

"She confronted Hiccup today andâ€¦let's just one of them didn't leave unscathed in that confrontation" she said, and Aaron knew immediately what Astrid might have done. "I'll never understand you women and your feelings and emotions" was all he said. "Let's just hope he forgives you dear" he said as he began drinking his soup. "More like me forgiving him for leaving me for one and a half years is more like it" Astrid said, not happy at all that she and Hiccup will have to work together.

"By the way dear, isn't Freiya's Day in just 3 days?" Ingrid asked. They wouldn't have enough time setting up all the decorations and food and training the dragons for this festival. "Ah yes, since that rogue dragon has started appearing again, Stoick has decided to push the festival back a week so that'll give Hiccup enough time to help Astrid with the planning and maybe catch that dragon" he explained.

"Where is Stoick now?" Ingrid asked. "He's back in his home, waiting for Hiccup to discuss the same thing" he said, and noticed Astrid break the bread unusually hard that she also crushed most of it in her hand. Aaron let out a sigh. "Look Astrid, I know you're madâ€¦" "mad would be an understatement" she interrupted him. "I know you're mad at him and I know two things about that boy, one, he's as stubborn as a yak and two, he doesn't know when to stop, so he'll try and make it up to you but don't take it too hard on him" he told her daughter.

"Ok dad, I'll take it easy on him" Astrid said. She knew Hiccup would try to win her back and show that he was sorry, and honestly, she was waiting to see what it was, but would make it difficult for him, despite her father's request.

**A/N: So there it is, Please Review and PM if you have any questions and with the suggestions of names. **

6. Hiccup's Side

**A/N: Well guys here's another chapter giving Hiccup's side of the night. It's been a while since I've been able to update, somewhat regularly and I'd like to thank for the reviews in the last chapter and please tell any other readers you know about this story cause it seems to be successful with you guys and the story is still young. So please review and I'll try and update as soon as possible. **

Hiccup and Toothless landed right in front of his home. Nothing had changed on its exterior and he was sure nothing had changed on the inside since he knew how in-tune Vikings were with the old ways, especially his father, other than the whole peace with the dragon thing. As he approached the door, he could hear laughter coming from the inside, and heard the familiar voices of his father and Gobber.

He let himself in, the door making a creaking noise as it opened, which grabbed the attention of Stoick and Gobber who were sitting at the table with mug of mead in their hands. "Ah there's my boy!" Stoick said seeing Hiccup enter along with Toothless. A fire was

already blazing with a fresh piece of yak meat on a spit cooking above it. "Hey dad" Hiccup said. His voice had stayed relatively the same since he last left, but just a little deeper, but not that much.

"So how has your day gone son?" he asked, seeing Hiccup take a seat at the table. "It wasâ€¦eventful" he said, pouring himself a mug of water, not wanting to talk about what happened with Astrid. Stoick knew better that Hiccup would have wanted to talk about his day, but hearing that small pause in his sentence meant something happened that he didn't want to talk about. "Ok son what happened?" he put it plain and simple.

"What do you mean dad?" Hiccup asked, trying to delay the inevitable topic. "What happened today? I know you're hiding something" Stoick said. "He just doesn't wan' to talk about his talk with Astrid" Gobber said, knowing full well of why Hiccup didn't want to talk about his day. Hiccup cursed himself under his breath. He was really annoyed at how his mentor could read him so easily. Or that Stoick knew what the problem was and didn't want to say anything before he could.

"Is that true Hiccup?" he asked. Hiccup stayed silent, looking into his mug. "Hiccup if there's a problem, let it out, maybe I can help" Stoick said, truly wanting to help seeing his son's depressed face. "It's just all my fault dad" he said not looking away from the water in his mug. Stoick and Gobber both looked at each other before looking back at Hiccup. "What is?" Stoick asked. "I told Astrid I'd be back as soon as I could and lookâ€¦one and a half years later I'm back" Hiccup started. Stoick nodded, indicating he knew that part but still didn't get why Hiccup was so down right now. "Well can she really blame you son. You yourself didn't know how long you'd be away" Stoick said, defending him.

"That's what I told myself, but then I realized I could have sent her something, a letter, or a giftâ€¦but I didn'tâ€¦I didn't take the time to write a letter that at least said _I love you_ on it. I know people are saying I've changed, but I'll always be _Hiccup the screw up_" he said. On the way back he thought about what Astrid said over and over in his head and he finally realized himself that it was _his_ fault, with no argument whatsoever. It wasn't like he had to train for twenty four hours every single day, he had time to do all what Astrid said he could've doneâ€¦and he didn't. She was right to be mad at him. Hel, he even thought she should dump him for being so blind. And he realized something elseâ€¦he _forgot_ about her. Not all the time, there would be the occasional time where he would come across a sketching of her in his journal, but other than that, not really.

"I'm a horrible boyfriend" he said putting his head in his hands. Stoick hated seeing his son in distress, especially the day he comes back. But hearing all that from his son wasn't quite so surprising since he'sâ€¦Hiccup. He knows that his son will take any burden upon himself and will admit to it, and seeing Hiccup worried like this worried him as well.

"Son, I know you're worried about your relationship with Astrid, but I'm sure you'll work things out with her" Stoick said. "He's right lad, it's not that end of the world for ya" Gobber said, who was also listening to the conversation. Hiccup's mood didn't change at hearing

how his father and Gobber were trying to calm him. "You guys don't get it. Astrid won't let it go that easily. I'll have to try to get her all over again, and if any other guy finds out about thisâ€¦" he stopped there, not wanting to say what other men might do. Astrid is the most attractive girlâ€¦of her ageâ€¦on Berk and there are many young suitorsâ€¦namely Snotloutâ€¦but he's worried that she'll leave him.

"Hiccup, you weren't here for one and a half years so you haven't seen what Astrid did to some of the young men who tried to woo her while you were gone, and they all kept getting the same response when she was through with themâ€¦_I have someone_" Stoick explained, hoping that would brighten up Hiccup's day, in knowing that if he played his cards right, he could still show her how much he loved her.

That news did liven up Hiccup a bit, but not that much since he had to make it up to her. "Well at least we all know what she'll do to me again if I mess up" he said in his sarcastic voice. "She did something to you?" Gobber asked, with Stoick also raising an eyebrow. "Yeahâ€¦she punched me in the faceâ€¦and dropped her axe on myâ€¦" Hiccup gestured to his crotch and Stoick and Gobber were wide-eyed. "Boy, you're lucky she didn't throw you off a cliff" Gobber said. "I'm actually wishing she did" he replied with a smile to which Stoick and Gobber also let out a laugh.

After their little conversation, Stoick decided to press on to more serious matters.

"Hiccup you know that Freiya's Day is coming up right?" Stoick asked. "Yes, not that I'm going since I don't have a date" he said. "Well, we're pushing it to one week from now" Stoick said, bringing relief to Hiccup, but with a few questions. "Really? Why?" Hiccup asked. They wouldn't normally postpone a holiday but since Freiya's Day is relatively new, he guessed it was an exception.

"Well first off we are behind in the decorations and food and the whole set-up for the festival, but we have another problem" his father said with grim eyes. "It looks like Toothless' friend is back" Gobber said. Both Toothless and Hiccup looked at Gobber, not completely clear of who he was talking about. "The Whispering Death" Stoick said which earned a growl from Toothless.

"But Toothless won their fight and last time I saw that dragon went underground and never heard of again" Hiccup said, surprised that the Whispering Death would be coming back. "Well it hasn't been coming regularly. More like once or twice a month and it never took anything, just damaged a few buildings and it looked like it was looking for something" Stoick explained.

"Looks like some dragons don't honour the code" Hiccup said jokingly while rubbing Toothless' head, who seemed to be much calmer than Hiccup expected since this was an enemy from the past. "So you want me to track it down?" Hiccup asked. "Oh no, we can't risk you getting hurt like last time. I just wanted to bring you up to speed about what has happened in the more recent days" Stoick said.

"It's also because we need you to train the dragons to have them in the festival" Gobber said with which both Hiccup and Stoick stared at him; Hiccup with a surprised face and Stoick with a mad face.

"Gobber! I was going to tell him that!" he said to his friend. "Sorry Stoick, jus' slipped out" Gobber replied, and Stoick just face palmed himself. "I don't think I should have you around when I tell good news" he said.

"You're bringing the dragons into the festival?" Hiccup asked with excitement, since he would be able to start working dragons almost immediately after returning. "Yep for the first time since the festival was made and that's another reason why we're postponing the festival so that you and Astrid have enough time to train them" Stoick said and as soon as he said Astrid, Hiccup just spat out the water he was drinking.

"Who's helping me?!" he asked, hoping he didn't hear right. "Yes son, Astrid is helping you train them. She was in charge of the academy in your absence and has also excelled herself in training dragons, so she'll be a perfect partner" Stoick said as he got up to get a piece of the yak meat that was cooking over the fire. "But dad, after just what happened? I don't think she'll agree to it" Hiccup countered. He had the utmost confidence that Astrid would refuse to help him accomplish this task.

"That's why her father is probably talking to her about the same issue right now" Stoick said as he sat back down. "You see Hiccup we had a chat with her father, and ya' know we didn' think you two would' av had this fight when you came back, that was unexpected as we thought you two would'a love to work together, but it's too late to change that, and now that'll give you perfect time together to make up" Gobber said.

Hiccup just sighed in defeat. There was no way he was going to get out of this, without ruining Freiya's Day anyway, which would not be happening. "Fineâ€¦I'll work with her, but don't expect me to live when this is over" he said as he got up and walked to his room upstairs, followed by Toothless. "Don't you want dinner?" Stoick called from below. "I'll come in a while dad" Hiccup said as he walked into his old room.

Nothing had changed since the day he left. Everything was still in its place bringing a smile to Hiccup's face about all the memories after the death of the Green Death. When he came to his bed he saw the toy dragon that his mother gave to him, and he remembered the trip to Breakneck Bog to retrieve it.

"We had a lot of good times eh bud?" he asked Toothless who was now busy warming up his bed and getting ready for sleep. Hiccup sat on his bed and took out his journal to write in the day's events, but when he reached into his pocket to get his pencil, he felt something rough and round and when he pulled out, it was a gold nugget, a nugget that can be enclosed by your fist. And when he opened the most recent page in his journal, he saw the designs of a ring he drew on his way back to Berk.

"Just a little bit more time" he said and put the gold nugget and journal on his desk. He looked back at Toothless who was fast asleep. He got up and went down to have dinner with his dad and Gobber. It was going to be a long night, talking about his adventures, the training and all the mishaps.

7. Whispering Death

****A/N:** Well watched the whole series of Rider of Berk, so all the chapters now take place from the last episode of the series. And sorry if this chapter isn't in as much detail as the others, since it's been a while, so please bare with me. ******

Hiccup's first day in Berk was definitely eventful. He managed to see all his friends, caught up with news with his father and Gobber, and a not so pleasant conversation with Astrid, which did involve him getting hurt—really hurt. He saw his friends, got to catch up with news on Berk and with his father and mentor. He had talked about the adventures he and Ripper had while at sea and at Atlaka. On one occasion they were chased by pirates at sea for 3 days, mostly because both ships were stuck in fog and they kept running into each other, and it would have gone on longer if Hiccup didn't decide to end it with Toothless firing a plasma blast at their ship's mast.

Out of all the events that happened on Berk while he was away, only one caught his attention. Stoick mentioned about Toothless' old nemesis, the Whispering Death, returning. But that was impossible since Hiccup remembered seeing the dragon on Outcast Island. But this Whispering Death, if they were the same dragon at all, only came about two or three times a month, and did no damage to the village. Stoick said that it looked like it was looking for something or someone. Guess some dragons don't honour the code. Before retiring for the night, Hiccup had already planned what he was going to do the next day. As Hiccup lied down for a goodnight's sleep, he looked at Toothless, "get a good night's sleep bud. We're going to say hi to an old friend".

The Next Day

Hiccup woke up as soon as the first ray of sunlight hit his face from the window in his room. He let out a huge yawn and stretched the stiffness in his body away. He looked to Toothless' bed and saw that he wasn't there. "Of course he would be up" Hiccup said as he got out of bed and put on his shoe and went down to prepare for the day ahead.

"Morning son" Stoick greeted his son as he came down. "Morning dad, I'm off to the academy" Hiccup said grabbing a sack and packing some food. "Going to train with Astrid?" he asked, remembering what he told Hiccup to do for the preparations for the festival. "Yes, and it's going to be a long day, so I need the energy" Hiccup said, as he left the main room to the door, hoping he didn't give anything away. "That reminds me, I won't be able to check up on you since my schedule is packed today" Stoick informed his son. Yes was all that Hiccup thought, before closing the door and hopping on Toothless who was already outside waiting for him and took off for the academy.

"Now what am I going to tell the others?" he said to himself. He had to find some way to get them to stay behind instead of them following him. He had to think of something soon because the Dragon Academy was already in sight and Toothless was making a dash for the entrance. Hiccup saw that the others were already there, including Astrid. Damn, this is going to be harder than I thought he said to himself as he got off Toothless.

"How does it feel to be back Hiccup?" Fishlegs asked, who was still petting Meatlug. "Nothing has really changed has it?" he asked looking around the arena. It was just the way it looked one and a half years ago. "Accept the person in charge?" Snotlout remarked, puffing out his chest and trying to look macho. _Well Snotlout definitely hasn't changed_ Hiccup thought. Ruffnut hit Snotlout in the back of the head, "Nice try yak brains, Hiccup knows Astrid was the one in charge" she said. Hiccup looked at Astrid who still didn't make eye contact with him. "So what's the plan today Hiccup?" Fishlegs asked.

"Uhhâ€¦" Hiccup tried to think of something fast. He couldn't let them know what he was really on about today. He was told to work with Astrid to help train the dragonsâ€¦. _That's it!_ he thought. "Well, all of you guys are supposed to help with the festival by training the dragons to perform in it" Hiccup said. He knew Astrid knew that something was wrong because he saw that quizzical look on her face and looked at him as well. "Wait, we're going to train the dragons to perform in the festival?" Tuff asked. "Oh this is going to be good, we have to teach Barf and Belch new tricks for destruction" Ruff said. _Clearly the twins haven't changed_ Hiccup thought.

"Guys, it's supposed to be for a celebration, not a revolution" Hiccup said. "That's a great idea Hiccup, we should start a revolution" Tuffnut said and sharing new ideas with his sister. Hiccup just face-palmed himself and shook his head. "Well we can all see how this day's gonna turn out" Snotlout said. "So Hiccup what's first?" Fishlegs asked.

"Oh well Astrid will be in charge because dad told take care of a boar problem in the forest" Hiccup quickly said. "And I'll be second in charge" Snotlout said getting closer to Astrid, who knocked him away when he got too close. "So you're not going to be with us?" Ruff asked, while Tuff got their dragon ready behind them. "Oh no, I'll checkupâ€¦to make sure everything is still intact when I get back" obviously seeing the target Tuff was setting up. "Don't worry Hiccup, we'll come up with a plan today and tell you all about it" Fishlegs said glad to have Hiccup back. "Well at least I know two of you guys will do good" he said, the other person being Astrid.

"Don't worry fishbone, me and Astrid will handle things here" Snotlout said putting his hand around her shoulders. Astrid just rolled her eyes and punched him in the stomach this time. "How many times do I have to tell you, never touch me" she yelled at the boy who was trying not to spill his breakfast. Hiccup just chuckled at Snotlout's predicament and with his goodbyes, got on Toothless and headed for the forest.

Forest of Berk

Hiccup had just finished scouting half of the forest of Berk in the air. He was looking for any large hole in the grounds where the Whispering Death could have come from and escaped. "It just doesn't make sense, Alvin wouldn't have let the Whispering Death escapeâ€¦unless he trained itâ€¦but he doesn't have me anymoreâ€¦besides I was gone for over one and a half years, and dad never told me about him attacking" Hiccup said to himself. This Whispering Death business really enticed him once again that it was bringing up previous adventures.

"If this one is different, let's hope we can train it" he said to Toothless who just growled in response, Hiccup not knowing if he agreed or disagreed. After ten minutes of searching to the left an open clearing which bore a huge hole in the ground that could have only been made by a Whispering Death.

He got off Toothless who ran up to investigate the hole. Hiccup saw Toothless sniff the whole and unlike last time, didn't growl. Even when Hiccup also peered down the hole, Toothless didn't push him away or try to keep him away from the hole. "Well what is it bud? Is it your old friend?" he asked and Toothless just responded by looking at him with his big eyes. "Of course, you don't understand me" Hiccup told himself while scratching Toothless' chin.

All of a sudden Hiccup heard a twig snap behind him. He now carried a sword at his belt and it had its own cover and he made it himself. He unsheathed it and turned around to survey his surroundings. Even Toothless heard it and was on the alert, because if it was the Whispering Death, they would have to get away fast. Hiccup got in a fighting stance, his sword at the ready as he kept his eyes on the forest in front of him—the direction he heard the sound from.

"Show yourself" he yelled—no response. Toothless was also ready in case the mysterious living being was a hostile dragon—or his old nemesis. Hiccup lowered his weapon and turned back to the hole, but he didn't put his sword back in its place. He was waiting if he would hear the sound again. _Crack!_ He heard from behind him and on impulse he threw the sword at its target. He stood shocked at what he hit—almost hit anyway.

Astrid stood still, not being able to even move or breathe as there was a sword right in front of her, embedded in the trunk of a tree, about a few centimetres in front and at her eye level. If it was a few more centimetres to the left of where Hiccup was seeing it from, it would have gone right through her head.

Astrid on the other hand was astonished at what Hiccup just did. He threw a sword and it almost hit its target. She was actually impressed by how much his skills had grown. But soon that feeling gave way to complete anger and she grabbed the handle of the sword and took it out and turned to Hiccup with death written all over her face. If Hiccup could be a Changewing, he wished it was at that exact moment, so she couldn't see the look on his face, or see him at all in fact since she would try and kill him.

Hiccup looked at Toothless also see the same expression—shocked as Hel. He turned back to Astrid who was now marching towards him with the intention of killing him right there. "Now As-Ast-Astrid—let's talk this out—" Hiccup said backing away from the fast approaching Hofferson. "Talk—hm? Let me see, you couldn't have said that before you threw your axe at my head!" she yelled. She was now only 6 feet away from him, and he was still backing away, not paying attention to anything behind him.

"A-at least I-I missed" he said, giving a crooked grin. "Oh yeah, by this much!" she yelled and showing her two fingers which appeared to be only five centimetres apart. "The-Then why did-didn't you—say something when I—ahhh" Hiccup yelled as he fell down the hole he was examining a few minutes earlier.

Astrid peered over the edge to see Hiccup lying flat on his back. "I'm ok" he groaned, making a small giggle come out of Astrid at his sarcasm. He always did that to lighten up tense moods, which was something she loved about him. _"Focus Astrid! Make things difficult for him"_ she told herself, and jumped down as well. Toothless also followed the teens into the hole.

"Soâ€¦can I have my sword back?" Hiccup asked after cleaning himself of the dust and standing upright now. "First, tell me why are you trying to get yourself killed?" she asked, pointing the sword at his neck. "Once again, I'm sorry for throwing the sword at youâ€¦and answering your question, I want to try and find that dragon so I can try and train it" he answered. Astrid thought he was out of his mind.

"Hiccup, this is one of the most feared dragons out there! It tried to kill you the last time and what makes you think it's not going to try the same?" she asked with her hands on her hips. Hiccup missed the way how beautiful she looked like that when she interrogated him. "Well?" she asked snapping him out of his thoughts. "That's if it is the same dragon since the real one is with Alvin, and I just want to see how this one is" Hiccup answered plainly before taking his sword from Astrid and placing it in his scabbard.

"Why are you so worried anyway? I thought we weren't together anymore" he asked, a smug grin plastering his face. "I'm not worried about you. I came because you lied to us _again_" she said, putting emphasis on 'again'. "And before you ask, don't worry, I left Fishlegs in charge so nothing should get too out of hand" Astrid said.

"So since you're hereâ€¦that means" Hiccup was hoping that their little problem was over but he was expecting too much. "I'm not letting that go, you still have to make it up to me" she said before walking past him. Since they were down here, they might as well start searching for this dragon. Besides they had Toothless so the search should be quicker. Hiccup quickly ran and caught up with her while Toothless went ahead making sure they weren't taken by surprise.

The tunnels were much like the ones of the previous Whispering Death. The roots of trees were sheered through, only a few gaps of sunlight penetrated the tunnels, light the dragon was sure to avoid. Everything was eerily quiet. Toothless had bounded off into the maze of tunnels leaving Hiccup and Astrid alone.

It has been ten minutes and they still haven't found the Whispering Death, and since Toothless had gone bounding off, the silence had made it awkward between the two of them. "Soâ€¦" Hiccup said, breaking the silence between them, hoping to start a conversation. "Uhâ€¦how have you been?" he asked. Astrid just rolled her eyes and tried to suppress a smile. That was the same question he asked her the day he came back. "Are you really asking me that again?" she asked, not turning to look at him. "Astridâ€¦you know I love you more than anything in this world, but what will it take to make it up to you?" he asked, now walking in front of her, so he was walking backwards while facing her.

"Let me think and I'll get back to you" Astrid shot back and continued ahead. Hiccup was out of ideas. He didn't know what to do

show her he loved her dearlyâ€|well anything that won't get him hurt now. But then, he thought of something that could work, risky but it could spark her love for him again.

Astrid felt Hiccup grabbed her hand. "What theâ€|" she said but wasn't able to continue as she was spun around and felt Hiccup's lips on hers. At first she wanted to kick him in the groin for attempting such a bold move but soon that feeling passed as she felt the love and passion Hiccup put into the kiss. She soon melted into the kiss and placed her arms around his neck while he had his hands around her waist. A minute later they pulled apart for air with Hiccup grinning at her. I take it by the blushing that you liked it. Astrid just smiled playfully and pushed him away. "Ok dragon boy, you've showed you still care, now take it to the next step" Astrid said and continued up ahead, trying not giggle from what just happened and the look on Hiccup's face when she said that.

"What does that mean?" he called behind her. _I'm never going to understand women_ he thought to himself and again caught up with her.

"Where do you think that dragon is?" she asked, but soon her own question was answered when they saw the huge head come out a tunnel and was looking right at them. "Run!" Hiccup yelled and pushed Astrid the other way so she was running ahead of him. "What about Toothless?" she called as the Whispering Death bore down on them with its huge mouth open and its teeth already spinning. "He can take care of himself, I'm more worried about us!" Hiccup yelled as they jumped into a nearby tunnel, narrowly missing the mouth as the dragon tore past them.

"There" Hiccup pointed down the tunnel they were in as it led to an exit above ground. They heard the blood-curdling roar of the Whispering Death, indicating it was coming back. "Go, go!" Hiccup yelled and they took off for the exit. "Quick, let me help you up" Hiccup said. Astrid got one foot on Hiccup's hand and with all his strength heaved Astrid up for her to try and get a grip on the edge of the hole. "I can't reach it!" she said and fell back down but Hiccup caught her before she hit the ground.

Before she could even thank him the Whispering Death peered its head into the tunnel and saw them and went straight for them. They were trapped, about to be torn to shreds by its rows of razor sharp teeth. When it was no more than ten feet away, Astrid clutched Hiccup with her head in his chest and Hiccup turned also lowered his head so it was touching hers as they feared this was the end. But then they heard the dragon howl in pain and when they looked up saw it was being dragged out of the tunnel they were in. When it was out of sight, Toothless came bounding in, grabbed the two of them and flew out of the cave.

Toothless flew to a certain height, let go of them but quickly got under them so they could take this dragon on. Hiccup quickly put his metal foot in its place and Astrid was holding on tightly to Hiccup's back.

The Whispering Death burst out of the ground with its roar which could even wake up the dead. It was clearly mad at how they had entered its home and was going to make them pay.

Again it was cloudy, meaning this dragon's one weakness was at bay. However Hiccup noticed something about this dragon. Yes it was the same colour as the one before but it didn't appear to stare at Toothless with death written in its eyes. Plus he also noticed that Toothless never seemed on edge with this dragon. Sure it was dangerous as Oden when he was angry, but Toothless didn't appear to keep Hiccup away. This was a completely different Whispering Death.

"We have to knock it unconscious" he said as Toothless circled the dragon from above. "And how do you propose we do that?" Astrid said. Hiccup looked at their surroundings, and quickly a plan developed. He saw a small cliff with a few loose boulders at the top. If he could get the dragon below those boulders and fire at them with a plasma blast, he could capture the dragon.

"Toothless get him to the cliff" Hiccup said pointing to the cliff. Toothless seemed to understand what his rider wanted and fired quick plasma blasts at the Whispering Death pushing it towards the cliff. "That's it, just a bit closer" he said. This dragon didn't even try to retreat underground. For some reason, this one stood its ground and tried to fight Toothless. _This has to be recorded in the Book of Dragons_ Hiccup thought.

However the Whispering Death fired its spikes at them. "Ahh!" Hiccup yelled and Astrid gasped at what just happened. Out of all the spikes, one hit Hiccup in the shoulder. Toothless saw this and was completely enraged at what this dragon did. Toothless quickly fired high velocity plasma blasts at the boulders on top of the cliff and all of them fell one by one onto the Whispering Death, burying it under the sheer weight of what looked like to be 10 tonnes of rubble.

Toothless landed some twenty feet in front of the rubble where the head of the Whispering Death could be seen and its eyes closed but it was still breathing, which was important.

Hiccup got off, clutching his shoulder which had a twelve inch spike in it. "Stay still" Astrid said as she inspected the wound. It couldn't be pulled out here in case it hit any major blood vessels. "We have to get you back to Berk now" Astrid said, with deep concern in her eyes. "But what about the dragon?" Hiccup asked, who was much more focused on the huge unconscious dragon under the rubble. "Hiccup you are more important right now than that thing" Astrid said as she applied some pressure to slow the bleeding.

"What in Oden's name is this?!" they both heard and when they looked up saw Stoick on Thornado and the rest of the teens on their dragons. Thornado landed close to them and Stoick quickly got off and rushed to his son. "What were you thinking boy?" he asked as he saw the state of his shoulder.

"That the Academy could use a new dragon?" he said with wry smile through the pain. "You could have gotten killed!" Stoick yelled as he looked at the lumbering Whispering Death which Toothless kept a close eye on.

"I can't believe you caught a Whispering Death!" Fishlegs said in complete astonishment. "I can't wait to study it" he said with excitement nearly bursting out of him. "First things first, we have

to get Hiccup to Gothi and have his shoulder checked" Stoick said. "Astrid you take Hiccup on Toothless to her and me and the others will bring this beast back" Stoick said. Yes it was remarkable that they had caught this dragon, but it would have been a surprise if they had and were unscathed.

"Yes Chief" Astrid said and soon she and Hiccup were on Toothless and heading for Berk with a new dragon on its way.

8. More Than One Enemy

**A/N: Well watched the whole series of Rider of Berk, so all the chapters now take place from the last episode of the series. And sorry if this chapter isn't in as much detail as the others, since it's been a while, so please bare with me. **

"OW! Take it easy" Hiccup said as the healer and village elder Gothi applied the thick liquid to his wound. She just stared at him. "If you don't want to die of a horrible disease we have to apply it roughly so it can take quick effect!" and with that she pressed extremely hard making Hiccup yell in the process.

"How does one get himself into these positions" Hiccup asked himself as Gothi went to get something to wrap his shoulder. "By going after rogue dragons when their father explicitly said not to" she said getting a linen wrap and coming back to him. Again Gothi made sure it was tightly wrapped around Hiccup's shoulder and so that the medicine wouldn't escape.

At that moment Stoick came in and immediately knocked his head on the low doorway of Gothi's home. "For the love of Oden, we should get raise these doorways" he said before looking back at the two and regaining his composure. "How is he Gothi?" he asked as the last time he saw him he had a spike sticking through his shoulder. "Taking the spike out was no problem, it didn't hit anything vital, just the flesh and muscle so nothing too serious, but his would should take at least three weeks to fully heal" she explained leaving Hiccup's side.

She went to her shelves of wonders. There were bottles, small dishes and jars that Loki knew what was inside. No one ever dared touch those jars for no one knew what they did except for Gothi. She came back up with one jar which had a close lid. "You should drink this for about four days to make sure he didn't contract any sickness" she said, giving it to Hiccup.

He opened it and saw a thick, slimy green mixture, enough to make someone throw up for a whole week. He even took a whiff of itâ€|big mistake. He almost threw up then and there. "You want me to drink this!?" he asked quickly closing the lid. "If you don't want to die, yes" she simply replied. Hiccup just sighed and got up to put his shirt on, and get his sword.

"Son I'd like to have a word with you" Stoick said and walked outside. "Oh no" was all that Hiccup said. In the past these talks always meant bad news for him, but he's never had one of these serious talks ever since the war with dragons ended. Hiccup walked outside after making sure he had all his possessions. He was immediately met with the bright midday rays of the sun, warming him

up a bit from the long sleep he had after sustaining his injury. He looked for his father and saw him with his arms crossed and a questioning look on his face.

"I know what you're going to say dad" Hiccup said, already prepared. "Oh do you now? Because this is how I see it. A day after coming back you get into a fight with Astrid, you disobey my order to go catch a Whispering Death, you almost got killed, you put Astrid's life in danger as well, and not to mention, you almost killed Astrid with that sword throw, and what else am I leaving out?" he said.

"No, that basically sums everything up" Hiccup said just swinging his arms by his side, in his usual sarcastic tone. He definitely felt bad for putting Astrid in danger and that he could have nearly got killed himself. "It's nice to see some things haven't changed" Stoick said. Hiccup looked up in surprise to see his dad smiling. "So you're not mad?" he asked. "Angry is more like it, since I also had to have a talk with Astrid's parents, who weren't quite pleased to hear that their daughter was almost killed twice in one day and one of those being from her future husband" Stoick said.

Hiccup's breathing stopped as soon as he heard the word husband. "What did you just say?" he asked, hoping he heard wrong. "I know you heard me Hiccup, and it's pretty much obvious to me and her parents that you two feel a connection, and I'm just stating the facts" he explained. Boy, the look on Hiccup's face was priceless.

"Dad, aren't I a bit young to be thinking about marriage?" Hiccup asked, since he was 18 after all. "Nonsense, I was your age when I married your mother, so you're that age Hiccup. Soon you'll be coming along with me helping with chief duties" Stoick said. "Oh joy" Hiccup said with fake enthusiasm. It wouldn't be long until Hiccup had to take over for his dad, and that's something he would have trouble with since he likes to have adventures instead of staying on an island and doing the same thing every single day.

"But for now, you're needed at the Academy" his dad said walking away to whatever duty he had. "Why" Hiccup called after him. "So after all that you don't want to see the dragon you caught?" he asked with playful confusion.

At that moment Hiccup bolted to the Academy, and Stoick was just laughing behind him. Still the same Hiccup underneath his new exterior he thought.

Dragon Academy

"Can't you get that thing to stop yelling?!" Snotlout asked, irritated as he saw the Whispering Death roar from its cell that was used to hold the dragons.

"We don't know much about that dragon, so it's hard for us to know what will make it mad andâ€¦" Fishlegs was interrupted. "Blah blah, just hit with something and make it shut-up" Snotlout yelled. Tuffnut was also among them in the middle of the argument.

Ruffnut and Astrid were in the background just watching them bicker. "So how are things going with Hiccup?" Ruff asked, trying to stir up a conversation. "At the moment, not so great" she replied. "You know Freiya's Day is in a week right?" Ruff asked. "Yes, and no, I'm not

sure who I'm going with" she quickly said.

"Cause right now, you're _currently_ not dating Hiccup, and so many guys would love to go with you, so it makes sense" she explained. "I know Hiccup will try and win me back so I'm waiting to see what he'll do" she said with a devious smile on her face, and that glimmer in her eye.

Ruffnut just smiled at her friend's deviousness. "It looks like I'm rubbing off on you" Ruff said punching her shoulder. "I know I'm worried" Astrid said jokingly.

At that moment Hiccup came in through the gates to see the guys arguing about the noise the dragon was making. "Well it's nice to see that you guys are so nervous about my well-being" he said as he walked past them.

The guys stopped their bickering as Fishlegs left them to talk to Hiccup. "Hiccup, I'm glad to see you're ok. Wouldn't want the person who caught the dragon miss its own checkup would we?" Fishlegs said, trying to be funny. Hiccup just gave his friend a _don't do that again_ smile, while shaking his head.

"So what do we know about this dragon?" Hiccup asked as he came within 10 feet of the iron gates that kept the dragon in its cell. "Well, we know that it has an extremely short temper" Astrid said coming up to them.

The dragon stopped moving about when it saw Hiccup, its pale eyes staring right into Hiccup's green eyes, as if trying to peer into his very soul. Hiccup never broke eye contact with the dragon, but instead was trying to send a message to it through his eyes, something like _It's ok, we're not going to hurt you_. The message didn't seem to work as the dragon tried to straight for him but hit the gate instead.

"This is going to take some work" Hiccup said, as the dragon retreated to the back of the cell, where the shadows were to hide from the midday sun. Just then Hiccup noticed something on the long tail of the dragon. "Wow" he said aloud, catching the other teens' attention.

"What is it?" Astrid asked. "Look at its tail, like near the end of it" Hiccup said pointing to the area and everyone's gaze followed his arm. "Teeth marks?" Fishlegs stated. They saw teeth marks and plus a small chunk of flesh was missing from the tail.

"Yeah, but it's not a Nightfury's bite mark, so this is not the same dragon that Toothless fought" Hiccup said. "Then what bite mark is it?" Fishlegs asked.

Hiccup looked more closely at it, trying to examine every detail of the scar and try to relate it to the teeth of other dragons. "Well it's not a Gronckle's, nor Deadly Nadder, nor a Zippleback, or Monstrous Nightmare" Hiccup stated.

"What about a Changewing?" Astrid asked. "No, not enough teeth in its mouthâ€|or should I say not enough rows in its teeth" he said. Everyone looked at him. "Rows?" Snotlout asked. "Yes rows, I looked more closely and saw there are three rows of scarred skin, so three

rows of teeth or even more" he said.

By now the dragon was looking at them, death written clearly in its eyes. "Wait, but there's only one dragon then that could have—" Fishlegs stopped as he realized what dragon it was. "Yep, he was bitten by a Whispering Death" Hiccup finally said. "Looks like Toothless isn't the only enemy that Whispering Death made" Astrid said as she looked at the Whispering Death in front of her.

"This dragon must be searching for the other one, that could only explain why it never really attacked Berk, it was just looking for that other Whispering Death" Hiccup thought. "So what do we do Hiccup?" Fishlegs asked. Hiccup took a deep breath in and rubbed his injured shoulder, the medicine and the horrible drink seemed to be doing its work. "We're going to train it" he said.

9. A New Connection

****A/N:** Hey guys, I'm really glad at how successful this story is as with the many follows and favourites. I'm really glad that you enjoy it and I hope you guys will continue reading it. But please leave a review if you're done reading a chapter so that I know if I'm doing well or need improvement, or even ideas. Please leave a review and enjoy this chapter. ******

Everyone looked at Hiccup with the same thought in their head, "is he mad?" "You're joking—please tell me he's joking" Fishlegs said, starting to freak out at the thought of training a wild dragon, a Whispering Death at that.

"Why would I be joking?" Hiccup asked turning around to see the still-stunned faces of his friends. "We're just training another dragon, what's different about that?" he asked, as if the dragon in the cell was another Deadly Nadder. Astrid made a small scowl at him, and soon was right in front of him. For the first time she noticed how much he had grown. She was a few centimetres taller than him before he left, and now he was at two inches taller than her, or more.

"What's different is that that dragon is first off a Whispering Death, and we all know what happened last time when you tried to make friends with one" she remarked, referring back to the time when Hiccup tried to train Toothless' nemesis—which nearly resulted in him being eaten, if it wasn't for Stormfly.

"I know where you're getting at, but think about the possibilities of having a trained Whispering Death? They'll be endless. We'll have a huge enforcer in Berk as well as if any threats were to come up" he said, with that twinkle in his eye looking at the dragon, who just avoided his gaze, staring at the cell wall.

"How about think about the possible outcomes if we get within arm's length of that dragon?" Astrid said. "She's right Hiccup—the last one didn't even want to be close to any of us, you really think this one will?" Fishlegs asked. They all had valid points. What would guarantee that this dragon wouldn't try and kill them. Heck, they captured it, took it from its home, good enough reason if any for the dragon to at least try and kill its captors.

"Look, I know all of you are skeptical, and yes it will be dangerous, but if we can train this dragon, to be on our side, we will one of the most dangerous, powerful dragons there ever were" he lectured. His friends still looked unconvinced. They were just not ready to get near this dragon—even the twins didn't want to go near it, especially the temper it was in right now.

"Fishlegs, we only know that this dragon is Boulder Class and its only weakness is the sun, that's all we know—Imagine what more we can learn. We barely know it, this would be a good chance to write in the Book of Dragons" Hiccup said, trying to convince his friend of his plan.

Fishlegs was so torn apart here. He wanted to know more about this dragon, but his 'fear' of dangerous dragons was telling him not to go anywhere near it. He knew Hiccup was speaking to his weakness, which was new facts about dragons and new dragons as well, and since not much was known about a Whispering Death, that love for knowledge just burned like kindle.

"Curse you for knowing my weakness" Fishlegs muttered under his breath, before giving Hiccup a nod in confirmation that he was willing to go through this idea. "Everyone knows your weakness Fishlegs, it's among any others" Snotlout remarked. "Well I guess I'm in it as well, since all of you will need someone like me in case something goes wrong" he said, once again thinking high of himself. "Ok then Snotlout, why don't you introduce yourself to our new friend?" Tuffnut said gesturing to the cell, where the dragon had turned its attention away from the wall and was focused on them.

Snotlout swallowed hard, "You know what, why don't we let Tuffnut go since he wanted to ride this dragon so badly last time" Snotlout countered his friend's remark. "Guys!" Hiccup called stopping the argument before it got out of hand. "I'll go first, Ruffnut, close the gate, we want to make sure this thing doesn't get loose" he said, and within a minute the main gate was closed. "Ok I want everyone back" he said, and his friends were happy to oblige. Astrid was worried to a certain extent as this dragon was mad mainly at Hiccup because he was the one who captured him after-all. "Be careful Hiccup" Astrid said before joining the others near the target boards. "Come on, it's me" Hiccup said, in an almost serious tone. "Yeah, that's what I'm worried about" Astrid carrying a small grin on her face, showing she had some confidence that he knew what he was doing.

Fishlegs slowly opened the gate of the cell so that Hiccup could walk closer to it. The sun was still up but now the shade went up till the entrance of the cell, so Hiccup was safe as long as he didn't enter the cell. He slowly approached the border of where the shade met the sun, and he walked right up to it. The dragon shifted from its current position, moving closer to the border as well to meet his captor. "It's ok, I'm not gonna hurt you, I just want to get to know you better" he said as he slowly let his right hand raise to meet this dragon's snout.

The dragon immediately shot forward, trying to take his arm off but Hiccup pulled it back just in time. The Whispering Death just growled, letting him know that if he came any closer, he'd take more than his arm off. "This is going to be harder than I thought" he

said. "Astrid could you get me an eel?" he asked and Astrid went over to a barrel where they kept the eels, the reason for if there was any unruly dragon, the eel would soften them up.

She came back to him with a large eel in hand and handed it to him, but also stayed with him this time in case he needed any help. Hiccup threw the eel in to see what the dragon's reaction would be. The Whispering Death just stared at it and in one second just ate it like it was a piece of fish. Everyone just stared at the dragon, not believing it just ate an eel. "Weren't dragons supposed to hate eels?" Snotlout asked. "Well right now I think most dragons hate eels except for this kind" Astrid said. This was going to be a problem now.

"Ok so other than the sun, this thing has no weaknesses" Tuffnut stated, to which everyone nodded. "Awesome! Can I have it once we're done training it?" he asked with a toothy smile, followed by a distinct sound of Ruffnut just punching her brother in the face and knocking him down. "Well you can have it now, but theirs is perfect guarantee that it will eat you" she said to her brother. "I think I'll pass" he said rubbing his nose which was red right now.

"Ok, so we know it won't let anyone come near it, and that it doesn't seem to hate eelsâ€¦what do we do now. It obviously can't be trained" Fishlegs said. Many thoughts were running through Hiccup's mind now. They could try and dragon nip but the last time it didn't work. You couldn't force this dragon into submission. "Guys, I honestly don't know what to do" he finally said. "Well the great and mighty Hiccup doesn't know what to do! This is a wonderful moment for us â€¦AH!" Snotlout started but was stopped when Astrid kicked him in the stomach and elbowed him in the back to the ground. "Don't worry Hiccup, we'll find a way" she said placing a hand on his shoulder.

All of a sudden the dragon tensed up and seemed to be focused on something. It came forward but stopped when it reached the border of the shade and the sunlight. Everyone looked behind them to see Ripper near the arena entrance and when they turned back to the dragon it had its mouth opened but wasn't roaring or doing anything.

"Anyone wanna throw something in there?" Tuff asked but was ignored by everyone. Hiccup ran over to the gate to let Ripper in. "Hey Hiccup, nice to see the new dragon" he said walking in. "Looks pretty good, big, strongâ€¦boy could we do some damage with him" he continued. "He sure is Rip, but what were you doing?" he asked, curious as to why the dragon was focused on him, and now had its mouth closed.

"Oh thatâ€¦I was calling him" he simply answered walking closer to the cell where the dragon was, who was still focused intently on him. The others stared at him as he walked and then back to Hiccup. "Calling him?" Astrid asked, making sure she heard him right. "Yes, I was calling him, you knowâ€¦like how you guys do your dragon calls" he said as he stopped in front of a dragon. "So that's why he was staring at you, because you were calling him" Hiccup said. "That must also explain why the dragon had its mouth open as well" Astrid finished off. "But why didn't we hear anything?" Fishlegs asked. "Yeah, most of our dragons have loud calls" Snotlout said.

"And this dragon roared when we entered its home" Astrid said. _That

was such a stupid move_ Hiccup thought, invading the home of a Whispering Death. "Yeah well, I guess it was angry since you did trespass on its territory" Ripper said. "Yeah, only realized that when he shot a spike through my shoulder" Hiccup said rubbing his injury.

"But what were you doing?" Hiccup asked curiosity thick in his voice. "Well it was more of a hunch I just tried but it seemed to work" Ripper said, still not mentioning what he was doing. That was it. "For the love Odin, WHAT WERE YOU DOING?!" Hiccup yelled. Everyone stared at him because of his sudden outburst and Ripper just laughed that he annoyed Hiccup. "I really like how I'm the one who can really annoy Hiccup here" he said, and Hiccup just rubbed his forehead. _I really hate him sometimes_ he thought.

"Well, if you must know, I was doing this" he said, as he proceeded to open his mouth and instead of a roar, it seemed like some cross of a whisper and a shout, but it was really quiet and the teens had to come close to hear it properly. They also noticed the Whispering Death came closer but with a more curious approach than a threatening one.

"You're whispering?" Hiccup asked, the first of them to say anything. "Well, it's more of a 'shout' whisper" Rip said the word shout between air quotes. "Do you know what you're saying?" Fishlegs asked, seeing that the dragon was paying attention to Ripper's actions. "No idea. It just seems that I'm able to communicate with it" he said, and everyone was stunned that it was a _shout_ whisper that enabled a person to get a Death's attention.

"Why the heck is it a whisper to talk to that dragon?" Snotlout asked. "Well maybe because it has _Whispering_ in its name, so I'm just guessing" Ripper remarked shutting him up. To everyone's surprise he lifted his hand and kept his palm open, to see if the dragon would accept him. "What are you doing?!" Hiccup asked his friend, who's hand was now inches away from the dragon. "I'm trying to invite for mead" Ripper replied sarcastically. "You know, I think we brushed off too much on each other" Hiccup said, seeing that Ripper gave more sarcastic answers.

They then all heard a low growl and saw the dragon had connected its snout to Ripper's hand. They all stared wide-eyed. An hour ago this dragon was trying to kill them and made it clear, and now that _one_ of them 'apparently' talked to the dragon, it felt like it could trust themâ€¦to a certain extent anyway. The teens watched on as the Whispering Death made itself comfortable with Ripper. Never in a million years did they have thought to see a Whispering Death, one of the most fearsome, dangerous dragons there ever were, behaving like a puppyâ€¦other than Toothless, but he at least looked like a puppyâ€¦a big, scaly, fire-breathing puppy.

"It looks like you finally have a dragon" Hiccup stated seeing how Ripper enjoyed being close to this big dragon. "Ahâ€¦I think it chose me, but yeah, it looks like I'm gonna be his rider from now on" he said as he turned around. "No fair! I wanted to have him!" Tuffnut yelled. Ruffnut just rolled her eyes and punched her brother in the stomach. "Sorry troll-face, now you have already have a dragon" she said, referring to their Zippleback.

"That reminds me, Hiccup I need to talk to you" Ripper said leaving

his new dragon and walking with Hiccup out of the arena. "Have you thought about Freiya's Day yet?" he asked. Hiccup stopped and slapped his forehead, he forgot. That's all Ripper needed to see. "Well you know you have five days left, so I'd suggest that you and Astrid start work as soon as possible" he said. "But I can't, I mean we have a new dragon, and I need to be there to help" "Hiccup, I know you're in charge now, but I will train that dragon and Fishlegs will take down any necessary notes ok?" Ripper said, making sure his friend stuck to his responsibilities.

Hiccup sighed knowing he was right. "Ok, I'll get to work to soon with her" he said. This should be fun he thought, knowing he'd get to work with Astrid, even though she's brutally testing him and he knew it.

Outcast Island

"Out of my way!" Savage shouted as pushed his way through the soldiers on his way to see Alvin. He had important news to deliver to him, and it wasn't wise to keep Alvin waiting. Usually someone else brought Alvin the news. That's why you can't ever be late with him. He arrived at a huge cliff which had a door to it. He stopped running and regained his composure before entering. Alvin's room was a sight to behold. There were dragon heads that were hung on both sides of the cliff. A huge fireplace, but other than the decorated furniture, there were weapons that adorned the walls as well and over on the far side of the room, a Whispering Death was looking at him with its master talking to an old man.

"Ah Savage, so glad you could join us" Alvin smiled as he turned to see his second in command. "Alvin, I have important news for you" he said. "Well why else would you be here, spit it out" Alvin spat, getting impatient. "Uhm well. We have information that the Dragon Conqueror has returned" he said.

"The boy's come back?" he asked, to which Savage nodded. "Oh happy day, I can finally attack Berk at last" Alvin said, an evil grin on his face as he went back to Mildew. "Why haven't you attacked Berk in the past year?" he asked. "Looks like your age is getting to you Mildew, don't you remember all the dragons we trained and all the villages we destroyed?" he asked, a glimmer of destruction in his eyes.

"Of course I remember that, but why haven't ye' attacked Berk yet. Why wait all this long when Berk was defenseless? Why wait till the boy came back?" he asked. He did have a point. Hiccup was the main reason why both their plans had failed in the past. Without him, Berk would have been sure to have trouble if they attacked.

"Mildew, you don't see the big picture don't you? I want him to be there. To watch as I take everything he holds dear. To see the pain on his face. That is why I've waited till he came back, and that he is, we can make him suffer. Besides, they think you're still a victim, and they don't know that we have a dragon army. Surprise is on our side this time" Alvin said walking up to his dragon. He rubbed his dragon's snout. It had been a while since that day after he trained it fully, and now one of the most dangerous Vikings was riding one of the most dangerous dragons.

"They boy won't stand a chance" he said with an evil grin, and

started to prepare plans of invading Berk to kill the Dragon Conqueror.

10. Survival

The sound of running footsteps, cargo being hauled, oars being set into place and the distinct sound of roars of Monstrous Nightmares, Deadly Nadders, Zipplebacks filled the air on the shores of Outcast Island. It had been two days since Savage had brought news of Hiccup's return to Berk, news that Alvin had been waiting for over one year to hear. Now he saw his chance to exact his revenge on the boy who denied him his victory over Berk so many times.

Hundreds of Terrible Terrors were being loaded into large crates, all of them purposely starved of any food for the past three weeks. The Outcasts learned that there's nothing more dangerous than a hungry dragon, especially hundreds of them that are fast, small and difficult to hit—not that the residents of Berk will kill the beasts at first. Alvin learned of this new method the hard way when he saw ten of his men get ripped in the ring when they unleashed three hungry Nightmares for them to train. Instead of feeling remorse though, all he saw was potential with the new weapon he discovered.

"Are those dragons ready to go yet?" he asked, getting impatient with the progress. "Almost sir, just need to load the last few cages" Savage said as he oversaw the final stages of the loadings. Alvin smiled contently at the sight before him. Ten ships, each had a cage that had over one hundred Terrors in them, hungry and ready to tear anything apart. Some dragons were also on the ships, as well as catapults at the ready and over a hundred Outcast warriors ready to spill blood.

"Berk won't know what hit'em" Alvin said with a toothy grin. "And may I ask what your plan of attack is again?" he heard the old man ask behind him. "For the love Loki Mildew, are you losing your memory—bet it has to do with the age" he chuckled seeing no change of expression on Mildew's face.

"Alright, listen up this time, we launch a ground assault on Berk, our ships will dock and we'll let loose the Terrors upon them and our men will start the attack. Right after we start the ground assault then we'll attack from the air with our new _weapons_ and they'll have their hands full with that and we can kill every single one of them. Understand?" he asked the old man.

"What about the boy and his group of friends?" he questioned. "Oh, we capture them one by one and leave Hiccup the last one so he'll be forced to surrender and we execute him first in front of everyone. Stoick will see his son's head fall off its shoulders and roll down right to him, seeing that his future will have ended with his son's death. And after that boy, we can execute everyone else one by one, and maybe I can take his girlfriend for myself" Alvin finished, and Mildew had a satisfied smile plastered on his face. Finally he could get his revenge on that boy and the whole tribe for putting their trust in such—_beasts_.

"Sir! The last ships have been loaded, and the dragons and men are ready!" Savage reported in. Alvin smiled and turned towards his

dragon, Dagger whom he most proudly called it. He hopped on to the large dragon and with one flap of its wings was in the air and Alvin was looking down on his men.

"Well boys, today is the day we show Berk what their fiercest nightmares are. Today we take Berk and soon the Archipelagos will fall under us!" he screamed and his men cheered with excitement. "Now onward!" he said and he flew in the direction for Berk, followed by many other dragons and his ships below.

* * *

><p>Knock...Knock...Knock

Hiccup was outside the Hofferson house now, waiting for someone to open the door. Ripper reminded him that Freiya's Day was only in five days time and that he and Astrid had to get to work on how to involve the dragons in this month's festival. And that was the reason he was here, to ask or more like beg Astrid to help him with the preparations.

He heard the door creak open and was thankful that Astrid wasn't at the door, but her mother was...which could be worse right? Hiccup straightened himself up and cleared his throat, "Afternoon Mrs. Hofferson" he said in a strong voice, though it still had his minor Hiccup features.

What happened next couldn't have prepared Hiccup, he was swooped into a breathless hug by Ingrid. "Oh Hiccup it's nice to see you again! My how you have grown!" she said, squeezing him so ever harder. Astrid heard the commotion downstairs and as she made her way to the bottom of the stairs, the sight before her was...speechless. She covered her mouth with her hand to stifle a laugh.

Hiccup saw her in the back and mouthed "Help me" and only then she realized that her mom had him in one of her fatal death grips. "Mom you're choking him!" she said as she came up to them, concerned for Hiccup. "Oh dear" she said and let go of Hiccup who immediately grasped his chest and took long breaths of Odin's sweet air. "I'm so sorry Hiccup, perhaps I was overly excited to see you" she said checking up on him. "Well you're the first one to be" he said with a laugh and both ladies were glad to see that he was ok. "Please come in" Ingrid offered and Astrid led him into the main living area.

The house was just like every other home of Berk. It had a cosy living area with bear fur on the floor in front of the fireplace and the family heirloom, which was a sword that seemed to glow, adorned the top of the fireplace. Hiccup hardly came to the home so it looked new every time he came in.

"Please sit. I would love to hear about your travels and training" Ingrid said as Hiccup sat down on what was a couch with Astrid sitting next to him. "Well...I would love to tell you about it, but...I came here to work with Astrid for Frieya's Day" he explained, hoping she wouldn't mind it.

"Actually Hiccup, I would love to hear about your travels, we can get to work later" Astrid said as she leaned back and crossed her arms. Hiccup looked back her mother who was looking at Astrid then turned her attention back to Hiccup. "Oh yes! Where were my manners? Hiccup

dear, would you like something to drink?" she asked getting up and making her way towards the kitchen. "Uh no thank you Mrs. Hofferson, I'm fine" Hiccup said and nodded his head again when Ingrid asked him if he was sure.

She anyway went into the kitchen saying she'll get something for them to eat while he was telling his story, and leaving the two of them in awkward silence. "So you need my help with Frieja's Day huh?" Astrid asked, breaking the silence. "Uh yeah, since my dad said that he assigned both us to work on it...I figured we should get started" he said. Astrid looked in the direction her mom left and since she heard noises of pots clanging and seeing a fire starting, she figured her mom would be a while.

"Well until mom gets back, I guess we can discuss about what we should do about the dragons. Any ideas?" she asked. Hiccup scratched his head trying to come up with something fast. Frieja's Day was in only five days so they should get started. "Well...we could get the dragons to possibly perform a show, like them flying over the village and doing certain maneuvers that could wow them" Hiccup said. Astrid let the idea settle in and started to see that the village, especially the children would be thrilled to see the dragons do an 'airshow' if you would call it. "That sounds like a good idea Hiccup, we should totally do that. Maybe we could involve some games as well with the dragon" Astrid suggested. Hiccup nodded in response, "Yeah, games sound like an excellent idea" he said. Pretty soon the ideas started to flow in. They had to cancel the ones that could result in some damages, even though they could be more fun.

"Well I guess we're settling with the airshow, as we're calling it, the games and rides for kids on our dragons" Hiccup said. "Yep I guess we have to start training the dragons for the airshow" Astrid said and that moment, her mom walked in with some baked buns she just made and set them on the table. "In case we get hungry while our guest is saying his story" she said and sat back across from Astrid and Hiccup. "So Hiccup, please tell us one of your stories" she said and he looked over to Astrid to see her smiling and encouraging him to tell one.

"Well I guess I can start with the survival story. Gods was that tough" he said wiping his forehead with the back of his palm. "Well it all started..."

* * *

><p>The city doors opened and beyond laid a forest with bears, wild dragons, and tough terrain that Hiccup would have to navigate to survive five days...while being hunted. Hiccup looked to make sure he had everything. It was just the first month into his training and it was all based on survival and today was his big test. He had his sword that he had forged himself, a bow slinged on his back with ten arrows and a hunting knife.

"Ready?" he heard Ripper say and turned around to see his now best friend standing behind him with some of his mentors behind him as well. "Do I have a choice?" Hiccup just weakly asked and turned back front. "I barely survived with Toothless in those practice situations, how do you think I'll do on my own?" he asked. There was a lot of negativity in his voice since he was supposed to accomplish something he would never stand a chance of.

"Look Hiccup, this is for your own good. What if you're without Toothless behind enemy lines and..." "...I know this Ripper, you told me a thousand times already" Hiccup said, interrupting his friend. "Look, you've improved a lot over the past month and this is just to test that. And you're going up against the best Hiccup...me" Ripper said with a smile. "That makes me feel so much more comfortable" Hiccup said with the usual sarcasm in his voice. "I'll give you a four hour head start, now go" Ripper said and stepped back a few paces. Hiccup started running...running like mad. He had to survive for five days in the wilderness which meant not getting caught by Ripper. "This is going to be good" he said as he disappeared out of sight of Ripper.

Night Time - Day One

Hiccup saw something that reminded him of home. The night sky filled with stars that shone brightly and looked the same from the place he looked at them back on Berk. But he didn't have the luxury from enjoying the sight from the ground. He was about twenty five feet up in the air, more of perched on a tree branch and resting against the trunk of the tree.

Being on the ground made him more of a vulnerable target since he didn't know if Ripper would continue searching for him in the night or take a rest like he was at the moment. He already had his dinner, caught a few trout from a nearby river and ate it by the shore so he wouldn't have had to build a fire that would definitely help Ripper track him faster.

Climbing up the tree was no easy task, took about an hour or so for him to come up with an easier way. In the end he got two sharp rocks, fixed them to two pieces of branches and started scaling the tree to a suitable lookout and safe point. Nothing eventful had happened that day, just continuous running from a person that was hunting him, everyday stuff for a chief in training.

Hiccup opened his pocket book, something he always kept close to him. It was the last gift his mother gave him before she died and it meant the world to him. He opened it and started flipping through the pages of personal phrases and images he drew. He stopped at one that warmed his heart..._Astrid_. It's been a month since he left and wondered everyday of how she was doing. _Soon_ he thought. _Soon I'll be back home_ he said to himself and closed his eyes to get a night's sleep.

Day Four - Evening

"How did I end up here?" Hiccup asked himself. How had this task gone so wrong? For the past six hours he was at the bottom of a ravine, with a sprained elbow, partially broken wrist and he had a nasty cut on his right arm, which was bandaged up with a part of his shirt to slow the bleeding. Ten feet from him was the body of Monstrous Nightmare, with stab marks in its chest and Hiccup was holding his sword which was covered in the dragons blood.

"I can't believe I killed a dragon" he said for the tenth time. His hands were still shaking with the sword in hold, and as soon as he realized it, he threw the sword as far from as he could. He looked back at the dragon, its eyes were still open and the life drained out

of it...a life _he_ took...a dragon's more or less.

He had run into this dragon by accident. He tried to calm it down but it just had the intent of killing him. It didn't heed to any of his calm gestures and just attacked. "It was in self-defence...it was" he repeated, still shaken by the fact he killed a dragon. But he had to focus on more important matters...one which is how to get out of this ravine.

He tried to get up but with his sprained elbow and badly cut arm, he wouldn't be going anywhere. He had to do something, he couldn't just be there helpless, heck, he had been helpless for most of his life. This whole trip was a chance to change that, and sometimes, a person always needed help. "He-Help" he moaned out hoping there was someone close by to hear him. He waited, he didn't know how long, but he moaned again..."Help" he said again. But he was blacking out and within a few minutes he slipped into a state of unconsciousness.

Day Five - Atlaka

"Wakey wakey princess" a voice said. Hiccup groaned in response and shifted in his bed, but soon a pain shot through his arm and he opened his eyes and slowly got up. When he rubbed the tiredness from his eyes he saw that he was in the infirmary of the city and saw Ripper sitting on a chair beside his bed. "How you doing?" he asked seeing his friend awake.

"I think Thor hit me on the head cause I have a major headache" Hiccup said rubbing his head. Ripper let out a chuckle, "Yeah, doc said that was a side effect of the herbs he gave you to prevent any disease from the scratch from that Nightmare" he said. Hiccup froze when Ripper mentioned the Nightmare and he looked at him. Ripper leaned forward, "What in Thor's beard happened?" he asked.

"The dragon attacked me...I tried to calm it down but nothing worked and we fell into the ravine...and...I had no choice" Hiccup was almost at tears when he repeated the story. "Hey man don't worry, you had no choice, it was in self-defence and you know it. But you were lucky I found you, I had been on your trail for sometime and it was only a matter of time until caught you, and then I came upon the fight scene and followed the path to find you unconscious and I brought you back" Ripper explained.

"Well I failed didn't I?" Hiccup asked, referring back to the task of survival. "On the contrary, you passed, you survived and no chief ever before you has been in a position like you have been and as a result you have passed" Ripper said with a small smile, knowing it was not the way Hiccup was expecting to pass.

Hiccup lied back down on the bed, and with a sigh asked, "What's next?". "Well we're travelling to a village near the mountains for more training. We'll be leaving in five days time, so you'll have plenty of rest, which reminds me, I'll be leaving you now so you can get your rest. See yah soon buddy" Ripper said and got up and walked towards the door leaving Hiccup to get a good rest.

* * *

><p>"I can't believe you had to do that" Astrid said as Hiccup

finished his story. "Well I still blame myself for not doing more but Ripper keeps telling me I had no choice" he said as he looked down to his feet. Astrid felt sorry for him. A person like Hiccup would never be able to kill something he loved and for him to do that must have hurt. Astrid placed her hand on his lap and lifted his face with other and gave an encouraging smile.<p>

"You have been through a lot Hiccup" Ingrid said seeing her friend's son in distress. "You really are ready to be chief" she continued. "And perfect age for marriage as well" she said with a smirk to which Astrid and Hiccup both blushed profoundly. "I guess..." Hiccup was interrupted when they heard a horn blow outside, the battle horn. Soon Aaron barged in and he was gasping for breath. "What's wrong?" Ingrid asked quickly getting up as well as Astrid and Hiccup.

"The Outcasts are attacking" her husband said.

11. The New Recruit

****A/N:** Hey guys, here's another chapter and hope you've been enjoying the story so far. Sorry for the not so recent updates. Anyway hope you guys are enjoying your summer vacation! Sorry about the wrong chapter!******

When Hiccup, Astrid and her parents came out, all they saw was chaos. Berkians were running about trying to gather their weapons, mothers were sweeping their children up and heading to the Great Hall. They heard the roars of dragons in the night sky and looked to see some of their dragons already in the air trying to hold back the Outcasts who were right now coming ashore from the docks. Four ships had already docked and because it was night, and from where they were, they couldn't tell if there were more on the way. But one thing was for sure...they had to jump in there.

"I gotta get to Toothless" Hiccup realized. But before he could set off , Thornado landed near them with Stoick getting off. "Aaron, what's the situation?" he asked his second lieutenant. "Four outcast ships have docked, we don't know if they're more and..." he was interrupted when they all heard shouts and screams. They saw men falling down and being swarmed by Terrors...and these Terrors looked hungry. "Hiccup get to Toothless, now, the twins, Fishlegs and Snotlout are already in the fight, we need our two best riders" Stoick said hopping back on Thornado and taking off.

"Come on Hiccup, I'll take you to Toothless" Astrid said as she ran to the barn behind her house, where she kept Stormfly. Hiccup followed in close pursuit. Stormfly was well aware of the danger that the village was in from all the commotion. Astrid quickly mounted her and helped Hiccup on her. Getting to his house to Toothless was the main priority here...if Toothless was in the air, it could turn the tide of the battle.

They reached the chief's house in no time and when Hiccup opened the door, he was tackled by a great mass of black. "It's good to see you too buddy, now let me up" Hiccup said as Toothless was covering him his licks. Toothless got off his rider and soon Hiccup was in the air with Astrid flying over the docks. They saw that all the Outcasts had disembarked and were moving up. They also saw cages on the decks saw that a few Terrors were still leaving the ship. "They must have

starved them" Hiccup said as he saw the Terrors try to take down anything that was moving, even some of the Outcasts, who killed them if they tried.

They flew a quick run over the docks and saw six more ships on the way. "Where are the others?" he asked and just on cue, they saw a cloud of green smoke cover two ships, and soon a enough an explosion that surely killed any living creature on the ships, shadowed by three flying silhouettes.

"Took you guys long enough" Snotlout said as he, the twins and Fishlegs joined them in flying V formation. "What's the status of our defenses?" Hiccup asked.

"Well, dock catapults have been destroyed, our riders are just getting into the air and we still have to contain the Terrors that are causing trouble on the ground...so our situation, not so good" Fishlegs briefed them. Hiccup glanced down once more. The Outcasts were advancing more by the second, closing in on the Great Hall. He already saw a few bodies of Outcasts and Berkians in their wake. He then looked back at the docks, only to see the four other ships were within feet of docking and letting loose more Outcasts and Terrors.

"We have to take down those ships now! Before they can reinforce the main unit" Hiccup said and took Toothless into a dive straight for one of the ships. "Remember bud, like we practised" he said to his dragon who nodded and got ready. Hiccup flew Toothless right on top of the water, just a few inches above the surface. Approaching the ships, Toothless turned sideways, his underside facing the side of the ship, and he let loose a continuous plasma blast that tore through the hull and came out of the other side of the ship, completely cutting the ship in half and leaving it to sink

Hiccup pulled Toothless back up into safer skies, "Good job bud, can't believe that actually worked" he said to which Toothless grumbled happily. Hiccup watched the others take down the three remaining ships, all with burning decks as well as burning Outcasts going down with the ships.

"Alright guys, lets go help the others" he said and all of them flew down to the village. When they got there, the situation was much worse than they anticipated. The remaining Outcasts, of which there were probably fifty or more, were almost at the Great Hall where the elderly, women and children were. Most of the men were about one hundred feet in front of the Hall defending it.

Hiccup saw Gobber and his dad among the men, cutting down any Outcast that got near them. Thornado was also there, grabbing Outcasts, flying high and dropping them or blowing them far from the island.

"Dad!" Stoick looked up to see his son and the other teens swoop down and join the fight. They all got off their dragons and got their swords and axes at the ready for the next wave. "The docks are cleared, so I'm guessing these clowns are the only ones left?" Hiccup asked joining his dad. "Aye, now com' on and les' cut down the rest of 'em" he said and they all charged to meet the Outcasts.

The sound of iron hitting iron, blood curdling screams...more

specifically Outcast screams...echoed throughout the village. Gobber and Fishlegs worked together with Meatlug on a group of five Outcasts. Gobber took down one of them by severing half of the man's neck, with blood spilling everywhere, and the Outcast falling to the ground, dead.

Fishlegs was backing up against a house, being cornered by two Outcasts, swords at the ready. He did have a sword with him but right now, he was too scared to use it. His breathing had quadrupled and each step they took closer, the more scared he became. But soon He saw both of them get hit with a bright hot red glowing mass and went flying along with it. When he looked to his right he saw Meatlug smiling at him. "Fishlegs! You have to use that weapon and kill them!" Gobber yelled as he took the two remaining Outcasts with ease.

"But...but..." Fishlegs stammered and Gobber saw the look of fear in his eyes. The fear of taking another life. Gobber lightened his expression and walked up to the young man, and took the sword out of his hands. "I know its tough lad, but ye' hav to know, there com's a time in a Vikin's life that he'll have to do something he doesn't want to" was all he said and put the sword back in Fishleg's hands. "Now com' on, let's warm out the rest of their welcome" Gobber said and went off to provide support for Stoick.

The twins seemed to love the violence and mayhem. Because they were so lively and agile, they easily dodged the Outcasts wild attacks and they even toyed with them. Their dragon did the rest, by grabbing the enemy and throwing them far away from the village, mostly in the direction of the sea. Snotlout and Hookfang were working together...just barely...to fight the Outcasts. Every time he gave an order, Hookfang did the exact opposite which always angered Snotlout, even though Hookfang got rid of more Outcasts when he disobeyed his rider.

Stoick and Thornado were making minced yak of the enemy. The wild slashes from the Outcasts could not even touch Stoick. With all his experience in the past...mostly from fighting dragons...cutting his way through the Outcasts was like a walk in the forest for him. Their lack of skill, and all in all their failure to interpret their enemy's next move left them easy marks. All they had was their size and sheer brutality which in this case was not enough. Every time Stoick was busy with a few Outcasts, Thornado would always have his back.

Hiccup and Astrid had each other's backs in the fight. Hiccup saw Astrid had lost any of her skill at all during the time he was gone. In fact they seemed to have been enhanced. She was so agile, quick, and her fiery spirit made her a dangerous and deadly fighter. She cut down any Outcast in her path, using her size against them. Being small does it have its perks. She was quicker to flank them, dodge their attacks and take them out. Stormfly was close by, cleaning up after her rider by impaling the Outcasts with her spikes or knocking them away.

After Astrid had taken her half of the Outcasts down she looked to her side to see Hiccup, and she saw amazed her. He was moving so quick...even quicker than her. There were two Outcasts coming towards him. He ran towards them, and she swore she saw a smile on his face. He dodged the first one and a second later brought his sword at the

Outcast's neck, making a clean cut and not stopping his charge on the second Outcast who was dumbfounded on how this twig took down his friend, he had no time to react to the sword going right through his heart. He pulled it out as soon as he knew the Outcast was dead and looked to see everyone staring at him in shock.

"What?" he asked. Clearly they were all surprised to see Hiccup's skills. "Son...you have..." Stoick could not finish his sentence because there were literally no words to describe his reaction. "How did ye..." Gobber started but was also in the same boat as Stoick on this one. "Yes, yes guys, I have changed..._a lot..._as Ripper would say. By the way, where is Ripper?" he asked, not seeing his close friend. He relishes defending Berk in a fight, and since this was an invasion, he expected him to be right at the front.

"I sent him to protect the Academy, ye' know, since our new guest is staying there" Stoick informed. "Well all the Outcasts are down" Astrid said with her axe over her shoulder. "Yeah, but where's Alvin?" Hiccup asked. "He would normally be leading the attack force" he said.

"Well that's cause I am" they heard an all too familiar voice. They looked up to their left to see a Whispering Death and a huge man on its head. "Alvin" Hiccup said the name with a bitter tone. Everyone could not believe the sight. Alvin had actually managed to train a dragon, a Whispering Death at that.

"My how have you grown boy. Tell me, what was it like all that time away from home" Alvin said stroking his beard in a wondering manner. "Torture" Hiccup blatantly stated. "Was it now...well...the you're gonna hate this" he said with a dark expression, and before they even knew it, all their dragons were being capture in large nets that were being dropped from the sky. When the group looked up they saw more dragons flying around, and some were carrying more nets, dropping it on their dragons to make sure the couldn't escape.

The dragons surrounded them, any sudden movement and they'd be roasted alive. Hiccup looked back at Alvin to see the smug look on his face. "How did you learn to control the dragons?" he asked. "You showed me boy, and I have to thank ye'" he said. Everyone looked at Hiccup. "You told him!?" Snotlout yelled. "What? No! I never told him anything. The only person I ever showed was..." he stopped in his sentence as soon as he realized it. He looked back Alvin.

"So Alvin, enough about me, tell me about Mildew. How long do you plan on keeping him alive?" he asked. "Mildew?!" he heard his friends say in the back. "You shouldn't be worryin' about the man who betrayed your tribe, more like what I'm going to do to you. Take them to the arena!" Alvin said as he flew off to the exact location. Some of the Outcasts got off their dragons and came up to the group to start binding their hands, and soon they were being led to what most likely be their deaths.

"Hiccup, what are we going to do?" Astrid whispered as they neared the arena. "I'm thinking, but I don't have any ideas yet" he whispered back. "Well we have to think faster, cause we're here" she said. The men led them to the centre of the arena where Alvin was waiting, looking at an array of swords that were placed in front of him, and his dragon close by, watching the prisoners.

"Where are our dragons?" Astrid asked. "Oh don't worry, they'll meet the same fate as you soon" he said without turning his back. "So what do you plan to do with us Alvin?" Hiccup asked. As soon as he said that a man came up and started removing his bindings and pushed him forward while the other men took the group to the sidelines of the arena. Hiccup looked back at Alvin to see him holding a sword that had to be four to five feet long.

"You've been a burden for me ever since we met boy, and I am tired we your meddling. It's because of you, that this miserable rock still stands and once I cut you down, nobody will stand in my way" he said as he got in a fighting stance. Hiccup looked around the arena. The whole group had worried looks for their friend and family member. _"They're near the entrance...what about the cell?"_ Hiccup thought and when he looked where the cell was, it was pitch black inside. He couldn't tell if the Whispering Death was still in there or not.

When he looked back at Alvin he was ready to charge. "Wait, I don't get a weapon. That's really brave Alvin, killing an unarmed man?" Hiccup said. Alvin thought about it for a while before he pulled out a small dagger and threw it to Hiccup, who as soon as he caught it, looked to see a huge Viking running at him with the full intent on killing him.

He barely dodged the first strike, the tip of the sword just inches away from his face. "There's no way you can beat me boy!" he said as he swung at Hiccup with his other arm, connecting his fist to his face. Hiccup flew a few feet before landing hard on the ground. The others looked on helplessly as their friend was fighting a boulder. Stoick was never so worried in his life, and as a father to watch your son trying to be killed is something no parent should face. Astrid was also scared, her eyes watching his movements closely, silently telling him what to do and how to counter, _hoping_ that was what he did, from his training.

Hiccup looked up to see Alvin about to bring his sword down on him, but he quickly rolled out of the way and the sword left a sharp cut in the stone floor. "I'm going to cut your head right off in front of your friends" he said and attempted another swipe. _"He's faster than I anticipated"_ Hiccup thought. When Alvin raised the sword for another attack, Hiccup saw this as his chance and quickly threw the dagger into Alvin's calf muscle. Alvin yelled in pain as his sword dropped out of his hand and he clutched his leg, and Hiccup gave one vicious right hook to his jaw.

The group cheered for Hiccup seeing that he was winning now. Seeing that his leader was in trouble, Savage, who was on the walk path on top of the arena, fired an arrow right into Hiccup's leg. The attack caught Hiccup by surprise and he fell down on one knee holding his leg. "Hey! That's not fair!" Astrid yelled and tried to rush in, as well as some of the others but were held back. They could only watch on as Alvin pulled the knife out of his leg and walk up to Hiccup who was still on the ground.

The arrow had gone right through his leg which meant he couldn't pull it out now. When he looked up Alvin grabbed him at the neck and held him up. "And when I'm done with you, I'm going to kill every single one here...starting with your girl" he said and threw Hiccup right into the iron doors of the cell. "Hiccup!" Stoick yelled. "You

coward! Face me!" he yelled to Alvin. "In due time Stoick" he said getting onto his dragon and moving to where Hiccup lay.

As Hiccup lay there, with an arrow in his leg and surely a few broken bones, he heard something behind him, coming from inside the cell. He saw Alvin on his dragon right in front of him, ready to finish him off. "Well boy, any last words" he asked.

"Yeah, he wants you to meet his friend" a voice said. When he looked up he saw Ripper standing on the walkway that was above the cell. "And who are you?" Alvin asked. "Better make it quick boy, my dragon's getting restless" he said and it was evident since Dagger was trying to kill Hiccup by trying to lunge forward but Alvin held him back.

"I'm Hiccup's best friend and a new member to the Academy" he said. Alvin let out an amused laugh. "And what dragon do you have?" he asked. That's when Hiccup and Ripper both smiled. "This one" Ripper said softly and pulled the lever that opened the cell. Alvin looked into the cell, albeit no one could see anything because for one it was night and two, you couldn't see anything in the shadows of the cell, which became as black as night in the night. And Alvin got the shock of his life.

The Whispering Death burst out of its cell and had its head above Hiccup, but staring intently at Alvin, or Alvin's dragon.

Hiccup saw Dagger pull back as a surprise. He could tell by the Dagger's behaviour that he was scared of the Whispering Death that was hovering above him in a protective manner. Hiccup smiled seeing the shocked expression on Alvin. "When did you get a Whispering Death?!" he shouted. "We captured one...turns out...this one was hunting for a dragon" Hiccup managed to say through the pain he was in.

"Which dragon?" Alvin asked, oblivious to the fact that the dragon in front of him was staring at Dagger. "Your one" Ripper asked. The look on Alvin's face became one of pure horror and when he looked back in front of him, the Whispering Death lunged for Dagger. Alvin was thrown off his dragon as it was hit by the Ripper's dragon.

During the commotion, Gobber, Stoick, Astrid, and the others attacked their captors. Stoick was able to get out of his bindings and started to free the others. "Fishlegs, Ruffnut, Tuff, get to the dragons!" Stoick yelled and with a quick nod the three teens were off in search. Astrid grabbed a sword off an Outcast's body and ran to check up on Hiccup.

"Are you alright?" she asked as she quickly knelt besides him. "Why do I always have something going through me...first it was the shoulder now it's my leg" he said. Astrid just smiled. Even in the midst of an injury, he still could be his normal, Hiccup self. Stoick, Gobber and Snotlout were finishing off the few remaining Outcasts, but were suddenly interrupted when a Whispering Death was thrown in front of them...luckily hitting the Outcasts they were about to slaughter.

They looked to see their Whispering Death, which they could tell since Ripper, who had come down now, was standing beside it. Alvin recovered from his fall and saw his dragon on the ground, still alive

but had submitted to the other Whispering Death. "It's over Alvin" Hiccup said getting up with Astrid's help.

Alvin let out a loud shout of anger. Again he had been defeated...when he was so close to getting his revenge. "Oh it's far from over Hiccup, it's just the beginning!" he said getting on Dagger and flying away.

"Told you it was a good idea to keep this dragon" Ripper said. "Yeah" Hiccup responded, knowing he made that decision. "Come on, we have got to get you to Gothi" Astrid said. The arrow in Hiccup's leg had to be removed since now it was starting to bleed really badly. "Come on son" Stoick said lifting him up and the group, followed by their new recruit, went to the healer's...again.

12. A New Start

****A/N:** Hey guys, here's another chapter, and just to MENTION, the image of Hiccup and the others in this story is like what the trailer was, how much they've matured. I DON'T OWN HTTYD. By the way, you can see on Google the images, and I must say they look awesome. They only show Astrid and Hiccup but that's what they look like in this story.**

"Hiccup" someone called out. Hiccup slowly opened his eyes, the early light of the morning peaking through the window was enough to make him squint his eyes. When he managed to regain most of his vision, he saw that he was back in the healers, except this time he had a burning pain in his leg. "Hiccup you're awake" he heard and when he turned to his left he was immediately grasped in a hug. "That...hurts Astrid" he managed to squeeze out when he saw the person had golden locks tied into a pony tail.

"Oops...sorry" she said before quickly letting him go. "I would punch you right now, but I don't want you to get more hurt as you are" she said. Hiccup just smiled and looked to see that his shoulder bandages had been replaced and when he looked under his sheets, he saw that the arrow he had, had been taken out and his whole calf was bandaged up.

"Gothi removed the arrow while you were unconscious" she informed. "How did I become unconscious?" he asked, recollecting that he walked into Gothi's while he was conscious. "Gothi opened up one of her many bottles of mysteries and gave it to you to smell and you passed out" she said. "That's what that smell was. I thought Tuffnut brought his dad's shoe" Hiccup thought.

"How are you feeling? Besides the arrow in the leg" Astrid asked. "Well, considering this is my second injury in less than three days, I guess I'm doing great" he said in a mocking tone, to which he saw Astrid raise her fist a bit but had enough self control to pull it back down. Hiccup had flinched when he saw Astrid raise her arm, but then realized that she thought she took him seriously.

"Astrid...I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that" he said looking at her to see she was looking at the door. She let out a tired sigh, "It's alright, and if you're wondering, the Outcasts have all retreated...the ones that were still alive anyway" she said. "And what about the...not so alive ones?" Hiccup asked.

"Their bodies are about to be burned in the centre of the village, since we can't bury them here" she answered. That was a fitting end to those damn Outcasts who attacked Berk. "What about our own losses?" Hiccup asked, knowing that he saw their own men and women on the ground, not moving. Astrid's face also turned pale. "Their ceremonies will take place tomorrow...but thank Oden, we only lost seven" she said, even though there was no lift in her voice.

They might have lost only seven people, but since Berk was such a tight community, they would feel devastated. Almost everyone knew each other in Berk. And those seven souls were going to be deeply missed.

"What about Ripper and his dragon?" Hiccup asked, trying to change the subject. "Well...his Whispering Death has certainly proved where his loyalties lie, and Ripper is fine, he and the others are eager to know how you're doing" she said, glad Hiccup moved onto a different topic. "Where's my dad?" he asked. Stoick was there the first time he got injured.

"He's overseeing the burning of the Outcasts and arranging the funerals" she replied. At that moment Gothi walked in with a bowl and some brownish, green liquid in it. Astrid covered her mouth and nose to prevent the smell from going in and Hiccup's face was turning green, matching the colour of his eyes. "Please tell me I don't have to drink that" he said, already feeling his gag muscles getting ready. Gothi simply looked at him and handed him the bowl, and made drinking gestures...fear confirmed. "Well here goes nothing" he said and held his breath and chugged as much of the liquid as possible. Luckily there wasn't a lot so he was finished in a few seconds. But the taste was so bad that when he put the bowl away, the expression on his face stayed for a full minute. Astrid had gone to get him a glass of water and he chugged that down in less than a second.

"Hasn't got the taste out of my mouth but...it's better. Thanks" he said handing back the glass to Astrid. "No problem" she replied. Just then, Ripper and Fishlegs came inside the house. "Hey Hiccup, since you're not fit to right now, can I run the Academy?" Ripper asked as he came by Hiccup's bedside. "Nice to see you care so much" he replied in his sarcastic tone, knowing Ripper was joking. "Besides, Astrid would run it, not you" Hiccup said, glancing at Astrid who smiled smugly at Ripper.

"Any-who, how you doing with the leg to complement the shoulder?" Fishlegs asked. "Uhh...not too great. I have to be careful now with this leg" he said moving his injured leg below the fur cover. "How's the Whispering Death doing?" he asked. "He's doing fine, happy he one his rematch with Alvin's dragon, by the way...his name is Razorcut" Ripper said. "Razorcut huh? Fitting name" he complemented.

At that instance Stoick walked in, careful of the low doorway this time. "How's my warrior doing?" he asked. "Uh...better than always" Hiccup replied. Remarkably the 'puke' he drank, since there was no other nice word for it, reduced the pain in his leg and chest, as he had a few bandages wrapped around his upper torso for the two broken ribs.

"That's ma' boy. Now I wanted to tell all of you that Frieja's Day

will be cancelled" he said joined his hands. All the teens' mouths dropped. They couldn't believe that one of the best festivals was cancelled. "Why?!" they all asked. "Easy now kids, well the damage from the attack yesterday will take a week to repair, plus Frieja's Day has already been pushed back a few times so...we thought that it should be postponed in the next two months" Stoick explained, seeing all the disappointed teen's faces.

"Damn Outcasts" Ripper said under his breath. "Gothi, how long will Hiccup have to recover this time?" he asked. Gothi began drawing images in the ground, and through those said about 3-4 weeks. "Three to four weeks!" Hiccup exclaimed. "What am I supposed to do during that time?" he complained. He was going to be so bored. He wanted to get right back into training, especially training the new addition to the dragon. "I only arrived a few days ago and I was really hoping of not sitting around all day doing nothing" he said with disbelieving look while staring out the window. "Well that's what you get for being popular" Ripper remarked. "Yeah...lucky me" Hiccup shot back.

"Gothi, is there anything that Hiccup can do without being stuck to his bed?" Stoick asked, knowing Hiccup will disobey her orders eventually. He has to stay in bed for at least a week. From then on he can walk about the village but can't do anything strenuous for the rest of the healing period_ she said through her images.

"Ripper, Fishlegs, you'll two be in charge of the Academy for the month" Stoick said. "Really?" was the response he got from Hiccup, and a loud "Yes!" from Fishlegs. "What about Astrid? She was in charge of the Academy while I was away" Hiccup said. He even did say that there was no way Ripper would be head, boy was he wrong.

"She'll be in charge of you for the month, making sure you don't go against Gothi's orders" Stoick said. Hiccup and Astrid both looked at each other and back at Stoick. "And what I am I supposed to do?" she asked. She could take care of him but she wanted to know what were the boundaries. "Well if he needs help to change his clothes, applying medicine and overall just making sure he doesn't go off" Stoick explained. The two late teens blushed when he said that she might have to help him change clothes.

"When do I start?" Astrid asked, suppressing her blush. "Right now. I'm sorry I have to put you at this task but I know that you're the best person for this job since you're the only other person who knows how to deal with him" he said. "What about me. I had to live, protect and train him for almost two years. I think I know how to deal with him" Ripper said. "Well are you going to marry him?" Stoick asked. By this time Fishlegs had left to tell the others about his new promotion...and to the teens in the room it was good that he left so that he wouldn't see their expressions.

Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other blushing and back to Stoick while Ripper just looked at Stoick with wide eyes. "On second thought, Astrid, you know Hiccup the best. See yah" he said and quickly followed Fishlegs' steps.

"Dad, you're not planning a wedding already right?" Hiccup asked, just wanting to make sure there weren't any more surprises. Stoick

let out a hearty laugh, "Of course not son, just needed to prove a point. Astrid, you can take over now" and with that Stoick said his goodbyes and left the house to continue with his chief duties.

Astrid and Hiccup were left in awkward silence. "Huh...uhhh...Gothi, is it alright if I head back to my house?" Hiccup asked, breaking the silence. _Yes you may. Astrid, stay by his side at all times_ she said and went back into her backroom, doing Oden knows what. Astrid nodded her head. She retrieved Hiccup's clothes and he said that he could put them on without her help, but had second thoughts when he had trouble putting on his shirt. "Here let me help" Astrid said without waiting for him to ask and put on his shirt for him. After he was done dressing himself, Astrid allowed him to use her for support and she helped him outside into the afternoon air.

The walk to his house was somewhat uneventful. Mostly because people were getting ready for the funerals that were going to be held tomorrow. Some people came by them and gave their wishes to a speedy recovery and thanking Hiccup cause it could have been a lot worse in the fight yesterday.

After ten minutes they reached his house. Astrid opened the door and Hiccup hopped in, making sure he kept pressure off his injured leg. Toothless was inside waiting and came bounding towards him. Astrid saw this, "No Toothless! Hiccup's injured and he can't do anything strenuous" she said getting in between Hiccup and Toothless and calming the dragon. Toothless seemed to have understood because he walked slowly to Hiccup and let him rub his head.

Hiccup pulled up a chair and sat down, with Astrid sitting beside him. "Sorry you have to be on Hiccup duty. I know you've got more important things to do" Hiccup said. "Not really, and don't mention it. I'm glad your dad put me on Hiccup duty" she said with a smile.

"Wow she looks as beautiful as ever" Hiccup thought. This was a good chance to see how much she had really changed. The time hasn't changed her personality but her beauty seemed to increase even more. She wore a red shirt this time with her usual shoulder pads, her spiked skirt stayed and she wore a sort of fur robe over her shoulders **(look at the pics on Google and you'll see what I mean)**. She had grown her hair longer as now there was more hair that was over her eye and her braid was longer, and by the Gods!

"Hiccup snap out of it" he heard a voice and came to see Astrid snap two fingers in front of him. "S-sorry...I didn't mean to...s-stare" he said meekly. Astrid thought it was cute. _"He hasn't really changed"_ she thought. "It's going to be pretty boring looking after me, are you sure you want to go through with this?" he asked. Astrid held his hand in hers and looked into his emerald green eyes with her sky blue, "I'm sure" she said. "Besides, what kind of girlfriend would I be if I didn't look after my guy?" she said with a laugh, to which Hiccup laughed as well.

Outcast Island

Alvin slammed the door after walking into his chambers. He grabbed a chair and threw it at the solid wall and it shattered into thousands

of pieces. "That boy is going to be the death of me!" he screamed. His remaining men and him had just got back and he was as mad as Loki when he found out that he wouldn't be king.

"Calm down Alvin" a voice said from the shadows. Alvin looked to see a dark figure in the shadows, but saw that his feet and some of his robe were in the light. "What do you mean calm down, I lost over three quarters of my men! And that boy still lives!" he yelled back. The dark figure still leaned against the wall, not a bit fazed by Alvin's anger.

"What are we supposed to do now?" he asked. "This test went exactly as I hoped it would, and don't worry Alvin, you'll get payback soon enough" the figure said walking to the door of Alvin's quarters. "And back to your question, I'm going to see a Berserker to see what he will think about saying hello to Hiccup again" the figure smiled and exited his quarters.

13. Future Strike

****A/N:** Hey guys, please leave a review because I want to hear your opinions on how I'm doing, if I'm doing a little a but OOC for the characters or if I need to work on a certain area. I need reviews or please PM me because then I know my story is really catching your attention. Thank you. And I might start doing POV from now on. And please check my other story, The Past Defines The Future, hopefully it's as good as this. ******

Unknown POV

"How far are we from the Berserkers?" a voice asked. The second in command looked far out in all directions of the sea. They had been travelling for about four days now, until "About 50 miles north east sir" the man responded to his superior. In that distance he could see a few mountains jutting up into the sky. "Send a few scouts to know that we mean business" the voice ordered, and with a curt nod and a hand gesture, fifteen dragons with riders on them set off for the Berserker Tribe.

Berk - Hiccup's POV

It's been a week since I sustained my newest injury and now I could finally leave my prison...which was my house...and walk around Berk again. Astrid had been incredibly helpful to me over that week. In fact she had to stay over because my dad didn't want me sneaking out in the night...which I would have done, knowing how stubborn I am. Dad set up a makeshift bed for her when he came back in my room so she could keep a close eye on me...and is she a light sleeper. I did try and sneak away but when I was at the window a candle went on and looked back to see Astrid staring with a face I knew all too well..."Do that and see what happens". I immediately jumped back into bed without a second thought.

We found things to do around the house. I even had to teach her how to cook. She was so embarrassed when she said she couldn't cook, which was no surprise to me since she was not the stay-at-home wife type. She did threaten me not to tell anyone, but I'm pretty sure most people knew but to them it wasn't confirmed. Since I am an only child and dad was out, I had to teach myself to cook. Did burn the

kitchen down once or twice...maybe thrice...but that's how I learned. But cooking wasn't all that bad, especially when you have a dragon that likes to play around. Out of the 2 hours we spent cooking, three quarters of that was spent trying to get the food back from Toothless who was moving quickly about the house.

Today I got an early start to the day. Astrid was already downstairs preparing breakfast when I joined her. "Morning" I said coming to join her at her side. "How'd you sleep?" she asked. "Pretty good actually. I can't wait to get out of here" I said, eager to get out there and start working again. "Yeah, I can't wait to get out of here. I can't understand how Ripper spent two years with you" she said with a witty smile. "What? I didn't destroy the house did I?" I asked, going back to old memories of me messing things up. Right now I just laugh when I think about them.

She took the bread out that she was baking and set it on the table along with some freshly cooked fish and meat. "Eat up, you've got a long day ahead of you" she said sitting at the table. "I thought I wasn't supposed to be doing work?" I asked, remembering dad telling me I can't do anything strenuous.

"Well Gobber wants you at the forge. I tried to tell him that your dad wanted you to take it easy but he said he still needed you" she said digging into a piece of bread. "That's Gobber for you, only will let you skip if you've lost a limb, until he builds a replacement that is" I said with a laugh, trying a piece of her bread. "Oh wow" I said after taking a bite of the bread. "What?" she asked looking up. "For once your bread doesn't taste like stone" I said with a laugh and she threw her piece at me, hitting me right in the forehead and I looked to see her fuming...in a good way.

"Your unbelievable" she replied with an agitated smile. "Well come on, I don't want to miss this day" I said as I finished my meal and got up carefully, Toothless by my side to make sure I took it easy, and Astrid at my other.

It was another crisp, cool day on Berk, given that the sun was shining brightly. Why we would settle in a place I'll still never know. I kept one hand on Toothless for support as we walked slowly to the Forge. "Gobber can't have anything serious for you to do right?" Astrid asked. I looked to her to see that she did have concern for me, considering my shoulder was still healing and that my leg was just beginning to heal. "I know it's nothing too strenuous, but we'll have to see" I said as we reached the Forge, which now was also a dentist's home for dragons.

The shutters were still closed indicating that Gobber had not yet arrived. I unlocked the doors with his key and walked inside with Astrid while Toothless remained outside. I opened the rest of the windows to let more light in. I then saw a note on one of the window shutters. I opened it:

Hiccup I found ye' journal and I saw what you plan to do for the lass. This whole day at the forge is going to be for that. Work on it, without the lass finding out. P.S: your journal and the gold are in your old room_

I crumbled up the paper and threw it in the fireplace. "Curse him, just curse him" I said, chuckling a bit as well. He always loves

toying with me but getting into my love life, oh, is he stepping the boundary. I walked into my old room at the back. This time I just had to duck my head a bit, an indication of how much I've grown. I saw my journal along with a wrapped piece of cloth which seemed to have contained two objects. I knew instantly that they were the gold nugget and diamond I mined on one of my trips. "Hiccup, are you in there?" I heard Astrid call. I quickly stuffed the cloth into my pocket. It had to remain a secret until the proposal.

Normal POV

Astrid walked in to see Hiccup holding his small red book that he always kept by him. "What do you write in that book of yours?" she asked coming up beside him. "Oh...I don't write in this...I just doodle" he said, not making a big deal of it. "Can I see it?" she asked. Hiccup tensed a bit at this, the designs for the ring were in this book and he didn't want her to see them. "Nope" he simply stated without taking his eyes off the book. "And why not?" she asked, not believing he just said no to her. "Because I said so" he said, but he knew she was going to try something, most likely violent.

"Hiccup" she said in a tone that immediately got him worried. He looked to his left to see that she had a dead serious face on. She took a step towards him and in response he backed up against his desk. She took another step towards him and he was leaning back on his desk, terrified for the world of pain that was about to be upon him. "Maybe I should have just given the book" he thought.

The distance between her and him was no more than a finger's length. But Astrid did something that Hiccup didn't expect at all. She turned him around and slowly sat him on his chair in the room. Hiccup grunted a little and soon straddled on his lap, but she still had her serious face. "Uhh...A-Astrid, what are you..." he stopped when she put her finger over his lips. By now he was already feeling movement in his lower area and she ran her hands over his arms.

Hiccup was at a loss for words by the way she was acting. And before he knew it, she was smiling, her victory smile, and that's when it hit him. "You are one deceiving girl" he said as she held his book in front of his face and got off him. She started flipping through the pages as Hiccup recovered from his...experience.

"Hiccup...these aren't doodles...they're...amazing!" she exclaimed as she saw drawings of dragons, landscapes, mountains, cities. Then she came one that caught her breath. Hiccup was hoping it wasn't the ring. "You drew one of me?" she asked as she looked over the sketch. It was an exact copy of her. From every detail in her clothes to every strand of her hair. That's when Hiccup grabbed the book from her and put it in his pocket. "I had time on my hands, so I drew what came to my mind" he said.

"Since it's near the end of the book, that means..." "That means that you were always on my mind. I worked for a long time on that sketch of you" he said coming closer to her. "So do you want an apology for me taking it too hard on you?" Astrid asked, going along with the whole situation they were in that could only end in one way. "Not exactly. Besides you did say I have to work to get you back right?" he asked as his face was just inches away from hers and circling his hands around her waist. She was brought in too close that her hands were now placed on his chest.

"That's right, and how's that going for you?" she asked their lips were getting closer by the second. Hiccup stared into her sky blue eyes, entranced by her divine beauty. "I'm working on it...but so far it's working" he said as he closed his lips with hers. It has been a long time since they got any alone time to themselves and now, with the entire Forge to themselves, it couldn't get better.

The kiss became more passionate as Hiccup pushed his tongue into her mouth and she gladly accepted it. Her hands moved from his chest to his neck and head and he lifted her onto his desk so that she was sitting on it while he moved his left hand along her leg. Even though he couldn't feel her skin, he knew that it was soft as a cloud. Her lips were like a field of wild flowers, extremely soft but bursting with excitement. Hiccup removed her robe that was trailing her and it fell back onto the table, moving his other hand to her back. After three minutes of passionate kissing they broke apart because of the lack of air staring at each other.

"I love you...so much" he said running his hand across her cheek. "I love you too" Astrid replied enjoying the feeling.

"And I love seeing these moments" a voice said causing them to jump and turn to see Ripper under the doorway, who immediately ducked when Astrid threw a hammer at his head. "Do you know what privacy is!?" she yelled, clear fire in her eyes. "Trust me doesn't" Hiccup said, also annoyed that they were interrupted. "Hey don't blame me, Stoick wanted me to tell you two that he wants to meet with you" he said, peeking his head into the room in case one of them threw something at him again. "Ok, thanks" Hiccup said and Ripper left, happy that he didn't get hurt.

"You know we have to get him back right?" Astrid said getting off the table and reattaching her robe to her shoulder pads. "Oh big time...for all the times he's got me and for this" he said walking out of the room with her. They left the Forge open as Gobber was coming back soon. "So looks like you've forgiven me" he said with a smug smile on their way to find Stoick. "It was just the moment" she countered. "Which was initiated by you with your...seduction technique" he said. Astrid laughed a bit. "You would love that to happen again wouldn't you?" she asked to which Hiccup grinned sheepishly. "Who wouldn't?" he said receiving a punch in his arm...the un-injured one.

They soon found Stoick by the docks with Thornado supervising the loading of a ship that were about to go out. "There you two are" he said, leaving his post for a minute. "What did you need me for dad?" he asked. "I wanted to tell you that I'll be leaving to the Glacier Tribe in the north. It's a diplomatic and a trade mission, and Raknok asked for my help. The trip is about a week in total so I just wanted to tell you that" Stoick said.

"Wait so who'll be in charge while you're gone?" Hiccup asked. "Well since you're still recovering and Gobber won't work so well, Spitelout will be in charge" Stoick said as he saw that the final cargo has been loaded. Thornado was already waiting on the ship for his rider to come aboard. "Oh boy, Snotlout will take full advantage of this" Hiccup said looking at Astrid. "Don't worry son, it'll be over as soon as you know it. Take care you two" he said before getting on the ship. Soon the sails dropped and with a little help

from Thornado's roar, they were well on their way in their journey.

"Well I'll be avoiding Snotlout for a while" Hiccup stated as he watched his dad leave. "Well don't worry about it, we'll try to avoid him the best we can" Astrid reassured.

The Berserkers

"So do I have your attention yet?" the Mysterious man asked Dagur. His escort was dead and anyone who tried to fight back were dead. There were fifteen dragons surrounding him. Some on the ground keeping his men and everyone else in check while some others were in the air doing a final recon. "Let me get this straight, if I join you, you'll show me how to tame these beasts and provide me with them?" Dagur asked, making sure he wasn't being played.

"That's if you join me, obey my every command and support me" the man said. "Support you in what?" Dagur asked. His reply was just a laughter. "In world domination of course, but first I need you to do a little test for me" he said. When Dagur heard world domination, that's all he needed to hear to join this man. "What do you need commander?" he asked smiling at the same time.

"I need you to try can capture Astrid Hofferson" he said.

14. Enter The Berserker's

****A/N:** Hey guys, NFS LOVER here. Did you guys get a look at the pictures of how the characters? I mean WOW, Astrid and Hiccup changed so much, and they both look so much better. Hiccup looks more masculine and handsome and Astrid looks as beautiful as ever...although I still believe she's has her fiery personality. Anyway, enjoy!**

Dagur's POV

I can't believe the man I just met. He just handed me ten more ships, along with twenty of his men...who are remarkably better than my own. I got to get rid of my own so I can get them. That would be wonderful. But first I have to complete this dumb task. I mean really? Kidnap that fishbone's girlfriend? Come on, give me a challenge at least. This'll be a walk in the forest. At least he didn't be specific in how I should do this task...which means...blood can definitely be spilt. "Oh this is gonna be a great day" I said as we were nearing Berk. It's been a four day trip so now, we would be at Berk by nightfall. Get ready to lose more than your girlfriend Hiccup. I looked at my sword, ready to sever his head.

Hiccup's POV

It's been four days since dad left...and thank Oden we haven't seen Snotlout. We got word from Ripper that he was just searching for me to rub it in my face but we stayed in my house the whole time, and Astrid told Snotlout that my dad gave her strict orders that no one should be allowed to see me...even relatives. That point was proven when Ripper literally threw him from my front door when he was coming over to talk to Astrid.

"Do I really have to go?!" I asked Astrid. Yesterday when Ripper had come over to tell me of a problem that occurred at the ring, but wouldn't tell Astrid what it was. Instead, since he came in the night, he told us to come the next day. "Yes we have to. You are the head trainer after all" she said as she clamped on her robe. "Besides, he looked really worried...so I bet it's serious" she said as reattached my prosthetic. You see on in my training it wasn't easy using my prosthetic since it was a big disadvantage...so I made a new one, one that can be readjusted to suit the terrain I'm in.

"Now come on and face your cousin" she said getting up and opening the door. I simply sighed and got up and walked out the door. "This is going to be a long day" I said. Well, it was already the evening so it was almost over. For most of the day I was in the Forge getting started on the ring. Astrid made sure Snotlout didn't interrupt me about his dad being the chief and because of her task, I was able to get some work done. I had cut out the perfect shape of the diamond I needed to fill the open place for the gold ring.

We walked with Toothless right to the Arena. My leg had improved drastically. The wound was still not done healing but it was getting better. "So what do you think the problem is?" she asked, trying to start small talk. "Uh...I don't know, usually in the past if something was wrong we would usually have to fly somewhere to solve it" I said. All our crazy adventures ended up like that. She laughed a bit. "Those were the good days alright" she said. "We can repeat them, except it could be just you and me" I said walking closer to her and holding her hand with mine.

"I'll think about it" she said, moving her bangs with her other hand over her eye. She always looked so cute when she did that. We reached the Dragon Academy and saw the others waiting for us...and Snotlout was there. "Hey Hiccup, did you hear that you have to listen to me for the week?" Snotlout said as soon as he saw us. "Three days left Snotlout, so I'm almost there" I said as I walked past him and to Ripper who was with his dragon, Razorcut.

"Ripper what did you want to talk about?" I asked. "Well first I think I know how to counter the sun's effects on the Whispering Death" he said with a smile. "Really?" I asked, not believing it. "I know, even I didn't believe it first until he showed me" Fishlegs said. Well Fishlegs has been proven then I must watch out for what he has. "What is it?" Astrid asked. "Eels" Ripper just answered. "Eels?" I asked not sure how that could work. Most dragons hated eels, in fact all dragons except for the Whispering Death.

"Yeah hard to believe right, but remember when Razorcut ate that eel you through in?" he asked. I nodded. "Well it eats eels and I guess there is something in an eel that helps this dragon cope with the sunlight. Maybe some sort of acid or chemical or meat inside it. I tested it, every time I gave him eels he was able to come out into the sun. I just have to give him one eel a day to come out in the sun" Ripper said, ecstatic at the discovery. "This has got to go into the Book of Dragons" I said. "Already taken care of Hiccup" Fishlegs said.

But then I remember Astrid said that Ripper was worried when he came over. "Wait then why did you sound worried?" I asked. That's when his face became worried again. "One of our ships spotted what they believed were Berserker ships in the distance. But that was

yesterday, so it's hard to say what way they were headed" he said. "My dad wouldn't have left if the Berserkers were coming" I said. "No but he would have told my dad" Snotlout boasted. One of these days I want to punch him in the face.

"Snotlout, Hiccup's next in line to be chief, Stoick would have surely told him if the Berserkers were actually coming" Astrid said. "Either way I think we should stay on our guard in case they're heading for Berk" I said. The others nodded and went about their business. Me and Astrid left the Academy and walked back. "What do you say we take the scenic route?" I asked, up for a little adventure. She made a thinking face about it, but I was sure she wanted to do it as well. "Sure" she said. I told Toothless to go back home which he reluctantly did, leaving me and my girlfriend.

We were at the shores before you knew it, the waves coming in, the moon in the sky, Astrid leaning on my arm...everything was just perfect. "You know...I really enjoy times like this" she said as we stopped. "Yeah, it's been so long since I had a peaceful night" I said turning to face her. She placed her hands on my chest and I placed mine around her waist and held her close. "I like these parts the best" I said. "Me too" she replied and we locked lips as we closed our eyes.

Then everything went black...

* * *

><p>I felt someone licking me...huge licks that left a lot of slob. Wait, what? I opened my eyes to find Toothless' head above me. "Toothless...w-what are you doing?" I said as he got up. He crooned as he nudged me with his head. I don't even know what happened. "Hiccup!" I heard someone yell and I turn to see Ripper and the other teens running to me. "Hiccup we saw Toothless running here. He clearly looked like something was wrong, what happened?" Ripper asked. "And where's Astrid?" Ruffnut asked the others joined me.<p>

"I-I don't know...we were taking a walk along the beach...and we kissed and everything went black" I said rubbing my head. I opened my eyes in realization. I remember a shooting pain through my head just seconds after we kissed...like something...hit me. "Toothless plasma blast" I said and Toothless shot one in the air and when it blew, I looked to the ground of the beach, and there definitely signs of a struggle. There were multiple feet and drag marks leading to a place where the waves were coming. "I was jumped" I said as I got up but immediately fell back down grasping by chest. "Hiccup careful, you have two broken ribs remember?" Ripper said helping me stand up.

"I was attacked here. I think one guy came up behind me, and I don't know but maybe I was beaten when I was unconscious. And I think they took Astrid" I said as I looked up, realizing my own words. "ASTRID!" I said and looked to the ocean. There must have been a boat there where they put her on and left. "Guys we have to go get her!" I said getting on Toothless. "Hiccup you're in no condition to fight!" Ripper said as he grabbed my arm.

"They took Astrid Ripper, I'm not going to just stay here and let them get away" I said. "Do you even know who took her?" Fishlegs asked. "I have a good suspicion" I said knowing those Berserker ships

were nearby somewhere. "Well you ain't going there alone, we're going to join you" Ripper said. I smiled. It was great to have friends like them. "I'm going to go scout ahead" I said taking off into the air.

"I'm coming Astrid" I said and Toothless kicked it into overdrive.

Astrid's POV

"What is the meaning of this Dagur!" I yelled. I was tied to the mast, the and seated on a crate. The rope went right around me, holding my arms down and constricting my body from moving. "Oh...I'm sorry for the...'rough' treatment, but you know how hard it is to control my men" he said coming up to me. He reached his hand out and pulled some of my bangs over my left eye. He had a sadistic smile on him. He ran his hand down to my chin, but I pulled my head back. He smirked and turned around and began walking to the helm. "Hiccup will make you pay" I said in a calm voice, knowing how Hiccup was when it came to me.

"Huh, the same Hiccup who has an injured shoulder, an injured leg and two broken ribs...maybe three after I kicked him those times...by the way, how was it watching your boyfriend get beaten?" he asked. By the Gods, if I wasn't tied to this mast he would be in a Scauldron's stomach right now. I saw everything that happened. When he locked lips I felt someone jerk me back and saw Hiccup get hit in the head by Dagur and he fell. The man who grabbed me was at least twice my size and stopped me from screaming while I watched Dagur kick Hiccup in the ribs. I struggled hard, even kicked the guy a few times but couldn't get loose. He was too strong and they tied me up...loaded me onto their small boat and brought me here.

"Besides it would be a while until he wakes up, granted that I didn't hit him too hard" he said. That smirk on his face was growing ever so wider. But that all changed when we heard the distinct sound of a Nightfury approaching. He looked at me and it was my turn to smirk..."Told yah" I stated.

Hiccup's POV

Me and Toothless were travelling at full speed. We were making our way east and right now I could see a ship in the distance with the few lights it had. "Alright bud, time to make them pay" I said and he smiled his toothy grin which meant he was ready to give them Hel. There was only one ship and that was the one Astrid was one. It was carrying the Berserker's tribe's crescent. This act of aggression broke the Peace Treaty that they signed.

"Toothless plasma blast!" I said and he shot a few warning shots right into the waters near the boat. I couldn't shoot directly at the boat because Astrid was on it. I soon saw Berserker men ready their arrows and started firing at us, but they were no match for Toothless' speed. You see, in my training, I also trained with Toothless, increasing our speed, agility and tactics.

"Toothless, blind shot" I said and he fired one right above the ship which exploded in a bright light, blinding everyone near it. This was my chance. Toothless landed on the ship and I jumped off going into a roll to absorb the energy of the jump. I packed a hammer with me so I

unsheathed it and ran straight for the nearest Berserker and knocked him right on the head. I knew the force I had to hit to kill a person, so I knocked him unconscious, and went for my next target. Things were much easier for Toothless. He simply wacked any Berserker that came near him with his tail and gave them a taste of his plasma blast.

After I was done clearing my share of Berserkers, I saw Astrid tied at the mast and went for her. "It's ok Astrid, I'm here" I said as I started cutting her ropes. "Hiccup lookout!" she yelled but it was too late. When I turned around, I was met with a kick to the face and went to the side a few feet and landed on my front side.

I turned over onto my back and saw Dagur standing there with a sword at the ready. "My Hiccup how much have you changed" he said. "Yeah, I get that a lot" I said as I stood up, holding my chest and my hammer with my right hand. "What's the matter Hiccup? Broke a few bones?" he asked in a mocking tone as he stood there. "What do you want Dagur?" I asked.

"What do I want? Oh that's simple...I want to test you" he said and lunged at me with his sword. I quickly side stepped out of the way and brought my hammer down. But Dagur was quick and blocked my strike with his sword. He used his other arm and punched me in the stomach. I staggered back clutching my stomach. "You won't beat me Hiccup" he said as he walked forward and raised his sword. "I'll always be stronger than you" he said as he brought his sword down with great force but I blocked it. "I have more experience than you" he said as he took another strike but again I was able to block it, but my arm got weaker from the strain it was taking. "And I'll always be..." he said as he kicked me to right where Astrid was and I fell on the deck hard on my back. "Hiccup!" I heard her yell.

I looked up to see Dagur raise his sword, "...I'll always be better than you" and brought it down, but at the last moment, a few spikes flew in his direction and knocked the sword right of his hand. "What the...?" he said and we looked to the sky to see the others had arrived. "Took you long enough" I said as I got up slowly and started cutting Astrid's ropes. "Well you did disappear without leaving a trace, so I won't go pointing fingers just yet" Ripper said. "You have a Whispering Death?" Dagur asked as he stared in awe at the massive beast.

"By the way, nice shots with the spikes" I said. "Oh that wasn't me" he said and that's when Stormfly appeared next to him and flew over to the boat and landed on it where we were. "You see Dagur, Deadly Nadders are very protective of their riders, and they don't like it when their riders get kidnapped" Astrid said as she got up and came over to rub Stormfly's snout, who was still staring at Dagur with the attention to kill him.

"Dagur, you have just kidnapped the future Chieftess of Berk, attempt to murder me and as a result you have broken the Peace Treaty between our tribes" I said, except one of those things should have stayed in. Astrid as well as the other teens stared in shock when I said future Chieftess of Berk.

Dagur laughed, a maniacal one at that. "Do you really think anyone here can vouch for you?" he said. "You all are just teens, who's going to believe you?" he asked.

"For an instance I would" we heard. "Dad!" I yelled as I saw him on Thornado flying to us. He jumped off and landed on the ship. "Dagur, you have just broken the peace treaty between our tribes by kidnapping the future Chieftess of Berk and attempt to murder the future chief. I suggest you leave now before things get out of hand" he said in a deadly voice. Dagur looked at all the dragons flying around, noting the Thunderdrome and the Whispering Death. "Alright I will, and we'll never speak of this again ok?" he asked as if nothing was wrong. I so wanted to punch him right then and there but...

"Oh Chief, one more thing" Astrid said as she walked up to Dagur and kicked him in his family jewels. All the guys, even my dad made that expression when we get hurt..._there_. "That's for kidnapping me" she said. She kicked him again in the face knocking him out cold. "And that's...for everything else" she said and she walked back to me and immediately hugged me. "Thank you for coming for me" she said. "Hey I'll always be here to help you" I said and locked lips with her.

"Ahem" we all heard coming from around us and saw that Snotlout and Tuffnut were making puking faces and the others staring at us. "Dad how did you get back so early?" I asked. "Well it turns out Raknar and his crew met us at a halfway point, so it shortened our trip and we were on our way back when I decided to fly back but then I saw this ship and...you know the rest" he said. "Now come on, we should get back home" he said. My dad, Astrid and I hopped on our dragons and took off for Berk.

"So, future Chieftess of Berk huh?" Astrid asked with a smirk. "I have no idea what you're talking about" I answered.

Back on the Berserker Ship

Dagur felt someone kick him. "W-What?" he asked as he looked up and saw the Mysterious figure above him. "I wasn't sleeping!" he said as he shot up on his feet. "Take it easy Dagur" the figure said in a deep voice. "Well looks like I failed the test" he said.

The figure still didn't look at him. "Not exactly, I needed to see what I needed...and as a reward, there'll be four of my men with their dragons waiting back at your tribe. They are going to teach you how to tame dragons and capture them. Do anything you're not supposed to and they won't hesitate to kill you" he said. Dagur smiled. He got his wish and had a new ally as well.

He then saw a dark dragon land on his ship. A much larger Nightfury, one with battle scars, a lot bigger than Hiccup's dragon. He saw the figure get on the dragon. "Wait, what is your name!?" he asked. "The son of Daedra" he said simply and took off.

15. Planning Ahead

**A/N: This has to be longest chapter in Fanfiction. 5,600 words or so, but hope you guys enjoy it. **

Hiccup's POV

The events of the previous night had left a sour imprint on my dad's

mind. The treaty that they had upheld for all this time was just thrown away by some rash, incredibly stupid stunt that just sent the two tribes twenty years back in the making. "I can't believe him!" he yelled as he stomped about the main room. "He even had the audacity to attack when I was gone" he continued his rant. "Out of all the completely low down idiotic things he's done, this has to top it all off" he continued. Me and Astrid were upstairs in my room, just recovering from the night's events. Turns out Dagur had broken another rib of mine...and I now have three...just my rotten luck.

Astrid was right now helping by applying the new bandages on my chest and applying a thick cream that was a combination of grounded leaves, herbs and spices to help with the sore muscles and speed up the healing process. "You're a real hazard you know that" she said as she rubbed more of the cream on my chest. "Really? Is that how I get thanked for saving you?" I asked as I saw her glance at me and smile.

"I did thank you remember?" she asked. She was talking about the kiss, but call me greedy, I wanted another one. "Uhh...no...could you please remind me?" I said perking my lips out and closing my eyes. Big Mistake. I soon felt her rub something on my lip and when I opened my eyes I saw that she was trying hard not to hit the floor laughing. "GAH!" I started wiping the cream off my mouth immediately. "Did that help click your memory?" she asked as she smirked at me and proceeded to apply the bandages.

"Oh yeah, you didn't tell me about it" she suddenly said. I looked at her, wondering what she was talking about. She could see the confusion on my face and so decided to tell me. "Future Chieftess of Berk?" she said raising her eye and smirking while she put away the medicinal treatment. "Are we really going to go over this again?" I asked. I was so not in the mood of discussing my plans...which right now were in question.

"Well you did say and I quote, '_kidnapped the future Chieftess of Berk_' end quote. So am I missing something?" she asked. "Ok first of all...that impression sounded nothing like me...second, it was just a way to trick him to display the seriousness of the situation" I said. Good save there Hiccup. Hope she buys it_ I thought. "I'm not the one who blurted out that I'd be the next Chieftess" she said getting defensive. "Well I don't know about it either okay...my dad said that he'd talk about it with me" I said and that exact moment we heard something breaking below. "You know right after...he calms down" I said seeing he was still mad about the incident.

"But Hiccup I'm serious...why did you say that?" she asked. I looked at her and she was serious. Her face didn't really tell it but the tone of her voice did. "I...(sigh)...I don't know Astrid...to tell you the truth it just came out" I said. Looking back upon the situation, mad would just be an understatement. I could not believe that Dagur would sink that low to get to me. He could have just kidnapped me and leave Astrid alone but no...he put her life at risk and it just got right at the heart.

"Maybe because I didn't know what he was going to do to you" I said. She listened in more clearly, and I still wasn't making eye contact. "I love you so much Astrid...I was away from you for almost 2 years and I thought about you every...single...day. I dreamed of the moment

when I came back home...back to you. And nobody else is going to argue with me on this, but...you are incredible Astrid" I said now looking at her. "You are, undeniably, the most beautiful, spirited, caring and understanding girl on this island...in my eyes. And...when Dagur kidnapped you, that felt like a personal attack on me...actually it was a personal attack. I guess the only reason I said future Chieftess of Berk was that...by getting that 'status' out there, they might know what they get themselves into before they go through with whatever plan. I understand perfectly if they come after me...but the thought of them going after you...just to get to me...it just sickens me" I said. I looked at Astrid and she was smiling lovingly.

"OW!" I yelled as she punched my arm. "That's for thinking I can't handle my own" she said...and then she leaned and placed a soft kiss on my lips. Unlike the other times this one was tender and caring. "...and that's for caring so much about me" she said as she pulled away. "I'll never stop caring about you" I said grabbing her hand and pulling her down on me, that she was sitting on my good leg. "You are my life...as is Toothless" I said looking at the big scaly lizard who was fast asleep in his corner of the room...or he was just listening in on our conversation because you can normally hear him breath heavily when he's asleep. "Seems he's tired from tonight's events" she said, looking at Toothless before looking back at me. "Nah, he just doesn't like us making lovey-dovey faces" I said to which she made that cute giggle.

"Wait, have you seen your parents at all during this time?" I asked. It's been three weeks and I feared that she was moving away from her family just to take care of me for a month. "Oh don't worry, I told them that I would have to take care of you for a month and they were more than happy that I was. They figured that it would be a good chance for us to bond" she said using air quotes for that word. "Do you know what kind bonding they had in mind?" I asked laughing. Considering we were just teens, adults had their own ideas. They thought that we were wild, outrageous, brash, acting on emotion people...and they are right. We are teens after all, we are in our late teens so we're getting the hang of it...just. But when it comes to my relationship with Astrid...that's where the gossip level is at its peak. There are so many rumours about us that people don't know which are true. They do know we are seeing each other but they don't know...how far we've taken the relationship. I'm not going to lie...I like to take my own time...even though since I'm in my late eighteen's, I am the perfect age to marry. It won't be long until my dad starts to convince me to marry...but I'm in no rush, and neither is Astrid. We talked about it and she said that she could wait...which was great news for me because I was still in the process of making the ring.

"How are you two..." we heard and when we looked at the stairs we saw my dad just smirking at the position we were in, with me laying on the bed with my back leaning against the backboard of the bed and Astrid sitting on my lap and us holding hands. "Does anyone have a sense of privacy anymore?" I asked, once again embarrassed at the position we were found in. "I wanted to know how you two were doing" he asked. "We're doing fine chief. I just applied his medicine" she said.

"I just wanted to say that since the treaty with the Berserkers is now broken I wanted to tell you to keep a lookout for when you go out

for flights because we know that they won't be afraid to start a fight" my dad explained. "Do you have any idea why Dagur would break this treaty?" he asked. It then got me thinking. Why would Dagur wait this long to start a fight. He could have attacked Berk when I was not here but only now. It might not jump at anyone but considering the many, _many_ weird things that have taken place here, it's hard to disperse. "I have no idea dad, but before he started the fight, he said that he wanted to test me...but what I don't get is why did Alvin, or Dagur even wait this long to attack Berk" I said. Clearly my dad was also thinking the same thing. "I don't know son, but something tells me there is a connection between their attacks. We have to be ready for another attack. Sleep well you two" he said before going back down.

"Oh, good evening Ripper" we heard him say. _"This can only end well"_ I thought and soon we saw Ripper leaning against the doorframe of my room with a smug smile. "What are you doing here Ripper?" Astrid asked. She was just as not in a good mood as me when seeing him, considering the last time he dropped in on us, and this time was no exception either. "What, can't a best friend visit his injured mate...without knowing what position he or his girlfriend would be in?" he asked, but it was a horrible lie as it was clear as crystal on his face he wanted to interrupt us but my dad beat him to it. "You know we haven't forgotten the last time you interrupted us right?" I asked. "How could I, now that is an image I wish I didn't see" he said with a laugh...but that smile was going to be slapped off his face soon. I looked at Astrid with a sly grin and she saw me glance my eyes to something behind her and I knew by her smile she also wanted to see the result of that. "What are you two smiling about now?" he asked.

"Well we did say that you would pay for interrupting as when we were in the forge" Astrid started. I could tell she was waiting eagerly to see the look on his face...and I was also eager as Hel. "Yes, I told you Hiccup that you had nothing to worry about...and wasn't I right about that when you came back you'd be making out with your girlfriend?" he asked, still oblivious to the pain that was going to come to him. "But other than unleashing Astrid unto me...I don't think you can do anything better" he said still basking in his 'thought' protection. "Oh really?" I asked. "Well I'm not going to unleash her...but someone else" I said. "Who?" he asked. I guess he didn't look to the shadows of my room.

"Toothless" I said and he perked his head up at me and looked at me and me and Astrid looked at him. I then glanced to Ripper and he also did. He looked back at me and I winked at him and his ears perked up and he stared back at Ripper, a hint of mischief in his eyes. Ripper looked at Toothless with that glint in his eyes and looked back to see me and Astrid smirking. "You wouldn't" he said as that smug look of invincibility disappeared right off his face. "Sick'em Toothless" he said and that instant he took off down the stairs with a 25-foot Nightfury after him. "This isn't over!" he yelled as he ran out the door with Toothless hot on his trail leaving me and Astrid laughing like Hel.

"Oh Toothless stop with the slob...Gah!" we heard Ripper's yells outside, indicating that Toothless caught him. Nobody could outrun Toothless even if they tried. He was the fast dragon there was. Even if someone did get an early start they'd ben caught in less than thirty seconds. "You're going to pay for that Hiccup" he yelled and

me and Astrid were just laughing our guts out. "Think he learned his lesson?" she asked. "Not even close. If I know him he'll find a way to get back at us" I said and we settled in for a long night.

The Next Day - Berserker Village/ Normal POV

Dagur watched as four Outcast ships docked at his port. He didn't like his commander's idea one bit...the part where the Outcasts would be coming to his village anyway. He never did like the Outcasts. Sure they loved to fight...lived for it in fact...loved murder and plunder and would do anything they wished because they thought they could get away with it...with the exception when it came to Berk. "Why do they have to come here?" Dagur asked his commander who had just strolled up beside him. "Because it's easier than me going to them" he said with not much care in his voice. In truth he thought it was a ridiculous question. "Is everything in the Hall set?" he asked, still not meeting Dagur's eyes.

Dagur felt his anger growing ever so much. He was one who didn't like taking orders from anyone, and here was this outsider acting all high and mighty on him in his own village. What would that show his men? They would probably think that he's no longer fit to be chief...a joke and a disgrace to the Berserker Tribe. "I wouldn't lose my temper if I were you Dagur" he heard him say, snapping out of his thoughts. "Because if you do disobey me or turn against me I'll wipe you and your tribe off the map...just as I have done with so many tribes who've stood in my way" he answered, giving Dagur a cold...death...glare. "Yes sir, everything's set" he replied to the question his commander had just asked a few seconds ago. "Good, now please wait in the Hall while I get Alvin" he said and began walking to the ships with his dragon behind him. Dagur just cursed under his breath and did as he was told and went to the Hall.

"Mornin' commander. Thanky ya' for inviting us here" Alvin said as he got off his ship with his dragon following him. "Save the nice tone Alvin, I know you don't want to be here...but it's a meeting so that you two can put aside your differences" the man said, cutting straight to the chase of this arrangement. Alvin immediately dropped his face knowing that he had been caught. Just as Dagur, he didn't like the Berserkers, mainly because of their chief who could not be trusted as his mind for violence would find a way to push for deceit in any alliance. "Alvin, push your petty suspicions aside. Dagur won't try anything because if he did he'd have to deal with me" the man said putting his arm around Alvin and leading him to the Hall. Alvin looked around as they walked. Some of the village was burnt down and there was rebuilding going on. But what caught his eye were these new dragons that he'd never seen on his own island or anywhere. He certainly knew that Dagur never had access to dragons and that only this man could have supplied him with them.

They reached the Hall in no time and when they entered they saw in the centre a huge round table where a few people there. Most of them were not from the Berserkers but from other tribes. The heads of the tribes were already sitting down at their respected seats and were waiting for Alvin and their commander to come. Dagur was already at his seat next to an empty one which was at the head of the table. "Alvin please take a seat" the man said and Alvin did as he was told and took the last seat that was meant for him. Dagur eyed Alvin, sending him a mental note that he didn't trust him one bit and Alvin just smiled a toothy grin right back at him.

"Now I invited all of you here for a reason" the man started. "First off my name is Drago Bloodfist, son of Daedra Bloodfist, and I am from the Stofferson Tribe to the east, deep in the shadows of the Dalouwar Mountains. We are the tribe that first tamed the dragons. And that gift has been past down generation after generation. But I'm sure you all heard of the tribe through legends and bedtime stories and all of them are true. Except that now I am the leader of the Tribe and my views are not of my father's. You see unlike him, I saw the potential in dragons...a power that we could harness and control our own" he said as he started walking around the large room, not looking at his guests but looking around thinking what to say next.

"To all of you, dragons are a pest...they raid your villages, steal your livestock, steal your food supplies and even in some instances kill you. But our village knows not just how to tame them, but control them" he said. People could see the glimmer in his eyes when he said that. "Aren't they the same thing?" Dagur asked rather bashfully. "On the contrary, they're completely different things. Taming a dragon just means being its master and letting it have a will of its own...controlling them, you control their will...their power...and that is a secret that only me and my village knows" he continued. "And with that power at your very fingertips, the whole world will bow down to you...and that is exactly what I'm trying to do here...I'm on a quest to conquer all the known cities on the maps, invade new lands and show them the raw power of the Vikings and their weapons...the dragons" he said coming back to the head of the table and placing both his hands on the table and staring at everyone in the room, trying to read their facial expressions to see what they thought.

"And what of those who stand in your way?" Malvor asked, the chief of the Raiders. He was a much older man than Drago, and had many years of experience in fighting. "Simple" he said and in the blink of an eye he threw a hidden dagger he had and hit one of Malvor's guards who was standing beside him right in the neck. The guard had no time to react and he fell back on the ground. Everyone in the room were in complete shock. The people near the guard saw him bleed out, and choke on the dagger that was blocking his trachea. He died in less than a minute. "Does that answer your question?" Drago asked, a small smirk on his face. All the leaders of the five tribes, including Dagur and Alvin stared at him...the latter two staring at him with a smile. "Finally someone who speaks my language" they both thought.

"I kill anyone who stands in my way without hesitation. There have been villages that stood in my way...(sigh)...I warned them...and yet they refused...such an unnecessary loss of life. Those kids had a life ahead of them" Drago said without much sympathy, more like just getting that fact out there. "I will continue to kill anyone who stands in my way...but for those who want to join me...I welcome them with open arms. I teach them on how to capture and train dragons so they can mass their own army and fight with me...but turn on me...and I will kill you all with extreme prejudice...a tribe did try that...and they're no longer with us...so I ask all of you...are you willing to join me, cause if not, you are standing in my way...and will have to be exterminated...because if you are not with me...you are against me" he said standing back and crossing his arms waiting for a response from the five chiefs in front of him.

The five chiefs looked at each other and discussed among themselves. Alvin and Dagur had already made up their minds when they first had a discussion with Drago. Both of their targets were Berk and Drago could give them the means of ending everyone's lives on Berk, and finally they could also move with him in world domination. The three other chiefs stopped discussing and turned their attention back to Drago. "We have agreed to join you Drago" Malvor said standing up. Drago looked at the other two chiefs to see them nod their heads.

Drago smiled inwardly...everything was coming together.

Berk - Hiccup's POV

I was in the forge working on a new experiment...well armour if you'd call it. During my training I constantly needed to refit the armour they had for me, and most of the time they were heavy and couldn't really withstand a blow from a sword without it doing serious damage. So I began collecting Toothless' scales and had ideas for making a suit out of that ****(A/N: like the one Hiccup wears in the trailer)****. So today began my assembling of it. I first had to stitch all the scales together before I could heat them to set them in place. "Do you really think that can protect you in a fight?" Astrid asked. She was sitting on the bench near the counter looking over what I was doing. "Sort of...it's also to help me stay warm when I'm flying with Toothless high above where it gets really cold. I heard her laugh at one of the sketches of what I'd look like. "What? It's really cool" I said while stitching the scales together. "Yeah...but you look like a dork" she said not putting down the sketch. I simply rolled my eyes...her personality didn't change a lot...and I liked that it didn't.

I was halfway done with the armour and it was extremely tedious work and I had to leave it in the smelter until the scales joined together to form a strong, tough armour. But that wasn't only on my mind. What my dad said about Alvin and Dagur attacking also nagged at me. I mean it was weird that they waited this long. Dagur could have attacked me while I was still on the ship and Alvin could have attacked while I was away, but why now? Why ever since I came back?

"Hiccup, what about the trip that we have planned?" she asked, snapping me out of my thoughts. "The trip? What trip?" I asked. These days I had so much on my plate that it was hard to keep track of anything. "Our usual dragon bonding experience with the others" she said. Now I remembered. Before I left we had these trips that we took to help bond more with each other and most of them just turned into war games where split up into teams and tried to survive each other for a whole two weeks and it took place on an island that was a five hour flight from Berk. "Oh yeah, that...I haven't had time to prepare myself for that. When do we leave?" I asked. "Well since I became the headmistress at the Academy, we'll be leaving in two days time" she said. "Woah...mistress? Never figured you for the mistress type, warrior yes...not mistress" I said.

"Well since you were _headmaster_, when I took over the guys just gave me that title. And besides, I like it" she said as she got up and came beside me. "Did you go on these bonding trips when I wasn't here?" I asked. "No, since we wouldn't have been able to split up into teams" she said. "Plus this time it's going to be interesting,

because the team who loses this time has to wash everyone's dragon for half a year" she said. "So don't mess this up Hiccup" she said as punched me on the shoulder. "Oh please I would I want to be washing dragons with you...wait? How would that be?" I asked myself as I started imagining me and Astrid washing the dragons...and oh Gods, did she look...

"OW!" I was snapped out of my thoughts when Astrid punched me really hard on the shoulder. "What was that for!?" I asked rubbing it. "That was for imagining me washing dragons...and I'm not going any further" she said raising her hand and I blushed at that comment. "Hey I'm a guy in my late teens with the most beautiful girl in Berk...not my fault something like that would cross my mind...when she brought it up. "Oh I'm gonna definitely lose on purpose" I said, making it her turn to blush. "Oh really now?" she asked and I immediately noticed the change in her tone. When I turned around I saw that she had got off her bench and was walking towards me. She didn't have the intention to kill me, but she had that smile where I didn't know what she would do. Her eyes gave her that smile that made her unpredictable. Her hips swayed in a fashion that only I would notice and no one else and soon she was right in front of me. "And why would you do that?" she asked in a seductive whisper as she wrapped one of her arms around my neck.

"C-cau-cause...we-well...I-I...I...you...se-see..." I stammered like Hel. Well who wouldn't when a girl like her would be cornering you like this. She giggled seeing my reaction and started nibbling my neck. _"What is she trying to do?!"_ my mind screamed at me. She stopped her...I don't know what...and looked at me with those blue eyes of hers. "Is that what you expect to happen if we lose?" she asked continuing to twirl her finger in my hair while brushing my lips with her lips. If that's what this was all about...she couldn't have introduced it in a more...subtle way. I still couldn't gather myself. My legs were weak, my mind was confused frustrated, my neck tingled, my hair felt funny and...my whole body just didn't feel like moving...she had that kind of an effect on me when she did this.

Normal POV

_"Hiccup's just too easy" _Astrid thought as she continued putting up her act. She loved to see him like this, how he got really awkward whenever she tried to act sexy around him. Even though he's grown up, he hasn't changed one bit when it comes to her. "Well? Do you expect it to be like this if we lose?" she asked again. Hiccup blinked his eyes, trying to recollect his thoughts which were at all parts in his mind right now. "We...Well...I-I-I..." he couldn't say anything else. Astrid continued her toying with him as she plastered his face with soft tender kisses. She was trying so hard not to break down laughing at his expression. When she stopped she thought she went too far because Hiccup now looked he just broke his brain trying to understand what she was doing. "Hiccup?" she asked breaking him out of his trance...again. Now she could start laughing and she did.

"I hate it when you do that" he said slacking down onto the ground of the forge trying to regain his breath. Astrid knelt down beside him seeing the effect she had on him when she really _turned it on_. "I'm sorry Hiccup...it's just too cute when you get awkward when I do that" she said brushing some of the hair away from his forehead.

"Wonderful to see that you can use my weakness to your own pleasure" he said in his usual sarcastic voice. He did get a bit irritated by it though. "So refresh me, what do we need for this bonding trip" he asked. It's been a long time since he'd done something like this. In his training it was usually him and a few others and he was supposed to lead them. These took place in wilderness areas where nothing could go wrong if Hiccup could not lead them properly.

"Well basic supplies such as food and water and when we get there we split into teams of two and try to survive for 2 weeks with who and what we have and we can use our dragons as well for this. If we engage each other in a 'fight'..." she said using air quotes, "...the losing team is out and have to wash the dragons" she explained. "It doesn't sound that tough" Hiccup said returning to his armour.

"Well it actually is because you have to keep looking over your shoulder for 2 weeks straight, find a place to live that is well hidden and not easily accessible, keep moving and strategize on how to get the others caught" she said. When she said it like that it didn't sound easy at all. "Oh yeah by the way, you remember Heather yeah?" she asked. _"How could I forget?"_ I said to myself. "Well she'll be moving to Berk tomorrow with her parents, and she told me she wanted to join us" she said.

"Wait a minute, since when did you become pen pals?" he asked. The last time...and everyone remembers that...Astrid was jealous of Heather because she was getting all of Hiccup's attention...not only that she was trying to steal the Book Of Dragons. "Well she did visit once when you were not here...and she wanted to apologize for what she had done, and she hoped that we had forgiven her. And since I was in charge I thought of what you would have done and I forgave her and ever since then she became friends with all of us" Astrid explained.

"Well, what do you know, I'm starting to rub off on you" Hiccup said laughing a bit. "Yeah it was a one time thing so..." she said and punched him in the arm. "Ow!" Take it easy, soon I'll have to ask Gothi to look at this arm" he said rubbing away the bruise that was most likely there.

"Wait if she's coming doesn't that mean there'll be seven of us?" Hiccup asked. "Yes, why do you ask?" she replied. "Well if we're going to split up into groups of two, who is she going to be paired up with?" he asked. Astrid never thought about that and when they both began to think about it...

"I still think I have Toothless slobber in my hair" they heard and saw Ripper walk in. "I am so going to get you back Hiccup" he said, still rubbing his hair. Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other and smiled and then back to Ripper.

Ripper noticed this and their smiles, "he's not here is he?" he asked, getting tense and looking around for a big, black-scaled dragon. "(Chuckle) No Ripper he's not here, and the reason we're smiling is that we have this bonding trip coming up in two days where we travel to this island that's a five hour flight from here and we split into groups of two and try to survive from getting caught for two weeks on that island" Hiccup explained. "Sounds like fun...who will I be with?" Ripper asked.

"Heather" Hiccup and Astrid both answered. "On second thoughts I might skip it" he said and walking out of the forge. "Losing team have to wash all the dragons for six months" Hiccup yelled after him and just like that Ripper was back in the forge. "Well in that case...count me in...Razorcut has needed a wash" he said with a smug smile.

"This trip will be interesting" Astrid said. And boy was it going to be a life-changing experience.

16. A New Side

****A/N:** Hey guys. I know it's been a while since I've updated this story but I really think I got some good material since I've been inspired again by the stories that have been going around. Anyway thanks to the people who follow this story and my other one, "The Past Defines The Future". ******

****Also,** question to those who read the latest chapter in that story, was it an M-rating towards the end, because I'm not sure what classifies a chapter or story as M, other than THAT itself. So please PM me or leave a review here if it was and if I should change the rating. Enjoy!******

Hiccup's POV

"How much longer till we make it there?" Tuffnut asked. I think that was the tenth time he asked that ever since we left Berk. We had left Berk far behind us and were on our way to Thor's Cove Island. It was a five hour's flying time from Berk. Astrid and Fishlegs had discovered the island on a routine recon flight that I normally did with Fishlegs when I was here. The only difference about this bonding trip were two new members.

"Can you please stop squeezing me!?" I heard Ripper shout.

"I would if your dragon stops looking at me as if I'm some snack!" Heather yelled back. I couldn't really blame her, ever since she got on, Razorcut had been looking at her in a weird way...not a 'I'm going to eat you' way...but in a 'I don't trust you' way. I think Razorcut had sensed his rider's discomfort with having Heather with him before we left Berk and also has been wary of her, just in case.

"Guys! Will you stop arguing! You're going to be partners in this so work it out!" Astrid yelled at them, and I saw them glance at each other, then Ripper focused on flying Razorcut while Heather, I believe loosened her grip on Ripper's stomach. After seeing the two calm down, Astrid joined my side.

"We should be just above the island, it's time to dive below the clouds" she said and Stormfly did just that.

"Come on bud" I said to Toothless and he did the same, followed by the others close behind us.

As soon as we broke through the clouds, I saw the island, and saying it was big was an understatement. It was about the size of Berk and the islands around it put together. The terrain was just that of

Berk, tall trees, hills, many cliffs, but there was one huge cove in the centre of the island, where the sea's waves met the shores of the island. We landed there and got off our dragons.

"Well Astrid, I've got to say this is a good spot" I said as I took in the surroundings.

"Knew you'd like it" she replied, getting her supplies from Stormfly.

"So how does this whole training thing work again?" Ripper asked.

"Well we split into teams of two and try to survive together for a week. It was two weeks but I decided to cut it down to one now because in this trip we won't be using our dragons for _anything_" Astrid explained.

"What?!" everyone yelled except for Heather, Hiccup and Ripper.

"Why can't we use our dragons...I mean...we use for them for everything" Ruff said.

"That's exactly the point of this training. One week on this island without the help of our dragons so we know that we would be able to take care of ourselves without relying on them" she explained.

"Wait, so where will the dragons go?" Snotlout asked.

"They're going to stay here while we move out in random directions" Astrid replied.

"Then what are the teams?" Fishlegs asked.

"It's Hiccup and I, Snotlout and Tuffnut, Fishlegs and Ruffnut, and finally Ripper and Heather" she said, while getting her knapsack ready.

"That's not fair...you'll easily win this...why do you even need Hiccup?" Tuff asked. "I bet we all know the answer to that question" Ruff snickered, followed by Tuff and Snotlout. However Ruff stopped laughing when a rock was thrown at her face.

"First off say that again...and spines will be coming at your face...second, Hiccup has had over two years of training, half of that to survive in the wild...so I'll see what he's got" she said standing next to me.

"Ok guys, you ready?" I asked. "NO!" they all replied harshly.

"Too bad, because it starts now" Astrid said and pulled me in a random direction. "Stormfly, stay!" she said and her dragon didn't budge. I saw Toothless coming towards us, so I did the same, "Toothless stay here!" I signalled to him. "Keep the other dragons here as well" I said. He turned to look at the four other dragons and nodded his head telling me he understood, and me and Astrid were on our way.

"So I guess you know where you're going?" I asked as I ran along

beside her, running through the forest as we ducked and jumped over fallen trees and made our way as far as possible from the others.

"Yeah, I know a great place where they'll never find us" she said. We continued running through the forest which was no problem for me. I knew I could beat her in a race thanks to all my training, but since she was the only one who knew where the hiding place was, I was forced to stand back.

"Your endurance has really improved" she said jumping over a fallen tree.

"A lot of things have improved, you just haven't seen me do them" I said, following her lead. However we soon stopped as we reached the base of a cliff. I saw her get some rope out, with one end tied to a hook. "We're going to climb up?" I asked, staring up to see how high we had to climb. It wasn't that high, the problem was its steepness.

"Yeah...too much for you?" she asked as she threw the rope with the hook at the end towards the top. The hook did its job and caught onto the ledge. She gave a hard tug to make sure it wouldn't budge and it didn't. "Ok, come on" she said, climbing up first. As soon as she was a comfortable distance above, I started my climb. To be honest, it wasn't hard. Guess all that training for two years did pay off. If I was my old self and doing this, I would be really struggling. But thanks to the muscle I've gained over my training it was a piece of cake. We reached the top with no trouble and before lay a cave, with a path that led deeper into the island.

"Why didn't we take the path?" I asked.

"Because it starts from the other side of the island, and this was the fastest way. Well hidden, a good vantage point...we'll be able to see or stay hidden from the others" she said as she walked into the cave. I followed her in, it was big enough for two people, so that was perfect, I only had one concern though.

"Wait, if we light a fire won't they see a faint yellow glow as to where this cave is?" I asked.

"This cave goes far into the cliff, so any light that we make should be hidden from sight, but if they do see the light and come for us, we can set up traps in case?" she suggested.

"Good idea, I'll set up the traps" I said and walked out to start work.

I did know a few things about traps before I left Berk, thanks to the lessons Gobber gave the entire class, but during my training years, I got a view into more deadly traps. I wasn't going to use them against my friends, but I could make less deadly versions of them. There were a few trees that covered the entrance of the cave. I guess the firelight won't be a problem at all. I broke a few branches from the trees and gathered them into one pile. I used the rope we used to climb up here and wrapped one end around the branches and began to pull on the other end, lifting the branches to a suitable height. Once that was done, I tied one end around a rock at the bottom, and tied another part of rope down so that it covered the whole path. If

someone were to trip over that rope, about one hundred and fifty pounds of bark would fall on them. I covered up any visible parts of the rope with dirt and made my way back to the cave.

Astrid had already set up a fire going and had some fish cooking. "Traps set up?" she asked.

"Yep" I replied as I sat down beside her.

"We can stay here for probably three days before we can move out, since it's not good to stay put for a long time" she said. I nodded my head in confirmation.

"So what do you think about the whole Outcast and Berserkers attack?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, doesn't it seem weird that they both decided to attack now? I mean just a day or two after you came back? I mean call me crazy but maybe they're working together" she said, while sharpening her axe.

"You're right, you are crazy" I said with a laugh.

"Are you really saying that when I have an axe in my hand?" she asked glaring at me.

"You're right sorry. But honestly, I find it hard that those two would be working together...I mean the Outcasts and Berserkers really hate each other, and wouldn't JUST put aside their differences...even if it's because of me" I said.

"But what if there's an external factor playing in this, a person who could bring them together?" she asked. I hadn't thought about that.

"Well then...I guess we have more trouble on our hands...lucky us" I said. "I wouldn't really worry about that right now, since our dignity is at stake for the next week...by the way thanks for shortening it for me" I said.

"Well since your dad did say that he needed you in Berk in eight days, I couldn't disobey him...and what are you worried about? We practically have this competition in the bag" she said, resting against her knapsack.

"Well I know Snotlout and Tuffnut are screwed, Fishlegs might have a chance but he has Ruffnut, but it's Heather and Ripper I'm worried about" I said.

"How so? Didn't you see them while flying here, they were practically at each other's necks. I don't think they can survive together on this island" she said.

"Well combine one of the most deceptive people we've met to a person who trained me...that's a deadly combination" I said. I looked outside and saw it was already dark outside. "Wow, it's already night, I guess we can get some shut eye?" I suggested.

"Yeah, but one of us should stand watch first, we can take shifts" she said.

"I'll take first watch, you can get some sleep" I said getting up and walking outside to keep watch.

"Thank you" she replied as she laid down, resting her head on her knapsack. I smiled and walked out to take my shift.

Normal POV

"What do you have against me!?" Heather said as she and Ripper continued walking through the forest. They had been arguing ever since they had set off.

"Nothing, nothing at all" Ripper replied, rolling his eyes, cursing his luck. He was walking in front of Heather right now, so she couldn't see that.

"Really, because that's not what your dragon conveyed" she said stopping in her tracks.

"Oh, I suppose you can talk to dragons right now...is there anything else you haven't told us?" he asked. Heather took a step back, not believing he was holding that against her.

"Ok, first...I know a thing or two about dragons, and one of them is that dragons tend to mirror the personality of their human, so when Razorcut was wary of me, I knew you didn't like me...and second, you're still holding what happened over 2-3 years ago over me?" she asked, walking up right to his face.

"You nearly destroyed Astrid's and Hiccup's relationship because you thought it was ok to lie to us when we could have helped you!" he said in loud whisper, in case the others knew where they were.

"I didn't know what to believe then ok...I wasn't sure you were going to help me, that was my mistake! But Astrid has forgiven me, why can't you?" she asked. Ripper sighed in annoyance, he didn't want to be discussing this topic further on in the open.

"Can we postpone this argument until we find a suitable shelter?" he asked. Heather simply gave a huff and walked past him, starting to look for shelter, with him not far behind.

An hour later they did find a cave that was well hidden by hanging leaves, and prepared themselves for the night. "So, tell me, why don't you trust me?" she asked, lying back against the wall opposite from where Ripper was.

"(sigh) Ok, you want to know? You don't realize the effect you have on men" he stated simply. Heather was taken aback by this.

"What do you mean?" she asked, wanting him to continue.

"Hiccup, Fishlegs, Tuffnut, Snotlout...well not surprised about him...all fell for you because you were sweet, beautiful and seemed defenseless that they just had to protect you, or be around you 24/7" he said, looking at the fire and avoiding her gaze. "The fact that all the guys I know fell for you because of your looks while you

deceived them, just gets to me...that's my problem with you" he said.

Heather diverted her eyes to the fire once he was done, taking in everything he had said. She knew she had an effect on men, and she really did feel guilty about playing them by her looks and misguiding appearance of being a damsel in distress.

"Ripper...I know what I did in the past was wrong...unforgivable...but please, you have to understand I'm not that person anymore. I have a family, a new home, a chance to start over, and it would really mean a lot if people forgot what I did, and allowed me to show them the new me" she said. Ripper looked to her eyes and could tell she was telling the truth, and here he was putting her on the stand for something she had done, which was to free her parents.

"I'm sorry for giving you a hard time Heather. You're right, I should forget what happened since you were forced to do that" he said, giving her a friendly smile.

"Thank you" she said, giving a warm smile in return. "So you really think I'm pretty?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes, I mean...who wouldn't. You have a perfect facial structure, beautiful emerald green eyes, kind and caring eyes, raven black hair, a beautiful figure as well...you're one of the most beautiful girls I've seen" he said. Heather blushed under the compliments she was getting, and made herself comfortable against the soft dirt.

"I'll take the first watch, you can get some rest. I'll wake you when it's your turn" Ripper said, giving her a pat on the shoulder and walking to the entrance. Heather then closed her eyes, settling in for some much needed rest.

Before Ripper walked outside, he took one look back at her, and couldn't help but feel a tingly feeling in his chest...and walked out.

Berserker Village

Drago was attending to his dragon, Deathwing, a Night Fury he had grown up with and the same one he used to defeat his father and his father's Night Fury in battle, making him the heir of his tribe. A few hours ago he was in a meeting where a few other tribes came to see this new Dragon Conqueror, and chose to be on his side when he continues moving east in his thirst for domination. There were just a few more villages to the east before his main obstacle, Berk. He knew if he had most or all of the tribes of the Archipelagoes on his side, Berk would have to surrender, or burn down in front of his eyes...he preferred the latter part.

His tests of having Alvin attack Berk and Dagur kidnapping the Hofferson girl were for him to see how the Berkians would respond, actually, how one of them would respond. He wanted to see this Viking in action, so he knows how to confront him in battle if need be...Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, the only person who posed a threat to him. He had flew on Deathwing from a suitable distance where he could observe everything, so he could pick out weaknesses that Hiccup didn't know he had. But other than being a boy, he was a

boy who took down the infamous Red Death and changed the course of history for his village. Drago was planning to kill the Red Death himself, but that boy did it for him, but that only concerned him more.

"So Drago, since th' rest of the tribes ar' with ye on this, what's next?" Alvin asked.

"What do you mean what's next, obviously we're going to attack Berk!" Dagur said, pushing Alvin aside, with which he wasn't too pleased and raised his fist.

"Stop bickering you two, and Dagur, we're not going to attack Berk yet...not until your men have mastered how to fly dragons" Drago said while stroking Deathwing's chin. "Besides, there are two tribes that didn't attend the meeting, the Bog Burglars and the Meatheads. I'm worried that they'll align themselves with Berk" he said.

"So what, we already hav' al' of the other villages wit us. What difference will two tribes make?" Alvin asked.

"Those two tribes are two of the three largest tribes in the Archipelagoes after Berk, and so the three of them combined could pose a threat to advance" Drago explained.

"So what do we propose we do?" Dagur asked. Drago thought for a moment, but then his face brightened.

"Dagur, you and I will leave for the Bog Burglars clan in eight days time and offer them a proposal" he said.

"What kind of proposal?" Dagur asked. Drago smiled.

"Marriage"

17. Exactly Alike

A/N: Hey guys, I just wanted to ask what makes my other story "The Past Defines the Future" more popular than this one. Since you're the audience, you could give me back some info on that. Enjoy!

Normal POV

"Marriage?" Dagur asked, hoping he heard right.

"You heard me...marriage, specifically your marriage" Drago remarked, as he began to walk to the hall, leaving Dagur with a face as stunned when he learned of the Skrill's discovery. He quickly turned and chased after Drago, getting in front of him.

"What do you mean _my_ marriage? I thought we were supposed to be planning for world domination as you promised...not planning on dressing me in robes and saying vows...besides, I am not marrying that old hag who calls herself chief!" Dagur yelled, crossing his arms over his chest and looking away from Drago, who's facial expressions remained calm.

"I _am_ planning for the war Dagur. By you marrying Camicazi,

Bertha's _daughter_, they will have no choice but to obey the laws that the marriage contract states, and since you're the man in the marriage, she'll have to listen to you and join us in our quest for domination" he explained. Dagur slowly glanced to Drago, who was still keeping a neutral face and was not at all amused by his childish actions. He was supposed to be _leader_ of a tribe after all.

"Why not intimidate them into joining us? Surely that would yield more results" Dagur suggested.

"And risk starting a fight with them. You know as much as I do that even though their tribe is made up of women, they are still fighters and will not bow down to men easily, especially to you. If we do start a fight, they'll call for help and they'll most likely call for Berk, and we are not that far in my plans to take Berk...so it will definitely be a loss if we go in forcing them into submission. And with Camicazi as your wife, you technically have leverage as since you don't really love her, you can threaten to kill her and the Bog Burglars should comply" Drago explained. Dagur still didn't like the idea.

"Stop acting like a child and come with me...I've decided to quicken that marriage plan...we leave in four days to their tribe and you better be in a mood or Odin help me, I will cut you limb from limb and feed your flesh to my dragon!" Drago threatened the last part menacingly, and his face was mere centimeters from Dagur's.

"I heard the dragons only eat fish" he said.

"Oh, Deathwing will make an exception" Drago said, in an almost hellish tone. Dagur looked behind Drago and saw his dragon lick its lips, and a smug smile plastered on its face. He focused his attention back on Drago.

"Alright, I'll marry her" he muttered.

Drago smiled and walked past him, on his way to his quarters. He needed this plan to go off without a hitch as having the Bog Burglars under his control just meant that he was one village closer to destroying Berk and his only rival.

3 Days Later

"I still can't believe you caught us!" Snotlout yelled. He and Tuffnut were tied together and were currently being dragged by Astrid and Hiccup back to the beach where they had first landed. Then Hiccup would signal Toothless to fire a few plasma blasts into the sky to signify that their survival trip was over and that there were two new cleaners for the dragons for the next six months.

"You only have yourselves to blame" Hiccup said as he moved some leaves out of the way.

"I mean guys really, making out as a way to have our guard down...can't say I'm surprised...or am I?" Tuff said. Astrid and Hiccup both looked at each other and blushed.

Flashback - 2 Hours Ago

"Well, I drained Tuff and Snotlout's drinking supplies while they were out hunting, so what now?" Hiccup asked as he returned to the large pond where Astrid was filling up their water supplies.

"Well, we now set up the trap at the only way in here, which is where you came from" she said, looking back at him.

"I'll fix up the same trap I did back up at the cave" he replied and went to work. They still had the rope they used and Astrid had cut down a few branches to use as the weights to drop on the soon-to-be prey. She also discovered a net lying about near the cave they were, and brought it along with her. It would be useful in placing the branches and hoisting them up with the rope. She looked over to see Hiccup's progress and was amazed to see that he already had the net with the branches in them in position above the ground and was just tying up the trip-wire.

"Well, that takes care of that" he said, wiping his hands and walking back to her. "Now, they will be skeptical about how there is just one way into this place, and I bet they'll be on their guard" he suggested.

"Why would you suspect that? They're Tuff and Snotlout, the only time when they're ever on guard is when making sure no one takes there dinner" she said, letting a laugh escape her.

"Well, I bet they'll know something's up once they discover their water cases are empty and that this place..." Hiccup said gesturing to the small area where there was a large pond, surrounded by 15 foot small cliffs "...is the only area close enough for them to get water and that there is only one pathway leading up to here" he concluded.

"Well, what do you think we should do?" she asked.

"I don't know...maybe we could hide in a bush and hope they come in here and trip the wire" Hiccup said. Astrid walked the other way, her arm under her chin thinking about one way that would guarantee that those two come in here without being on edge. That's when it hit her.

"Well I don't think we should hide...in fact we should make ourselves visible for them to see...but we can't look like we were waiting for them. We have to be distracted...and I know the one way that we can look distracted" she said standing right in front of him and trailing a finger down his chest. Hiccup watched her finger trail across his chest and stomach, and then looked back at her.

"Is this for our benefit of winning...or something else?" Hiccup asked, closing the gap between their faces.

He was surprised when Astrid pushed him back against a small rock that was about 8 feet high, and planting her arms on his sides, effectively trapping him.

"Well, they will think we are distracted...with each other...and will try and sneak up on us and once they trip that wire..." she said in a seductive tone, while closing the gap between their lips, but when they were mere inches away, she stopped and glanced up at him, "...they'll be trapped, like a dragon in a netter" she said.

"I don't like this" Hiccup stated which caused some confusion in Astrid, but then as she knew it...she found her back pressed against the wall with Hiccup's hands keeping her there. It took a while for her to realize their new position, but smiled when she saw Hiccup flashing his signature smile. "I like this position way better" he said.

"Well then, let's get _distracting_" Astrid concluded and grabbed his face and met his lips, placing them in a soon to be full make out session. Hiccup moved his hands from the wall and encircled them around Astrid's waist and pressed their bodies together. The whole idea of this was to act like they were distracted and they were, 99% distracted with each other than actually pretending to be distracted.

It had been a while since they had any time with each other. The only real possible moment they had was in the forge before Ripper interrupted them. But now, throw in a semi-secluded spot with a large pond in the background, sun glittering along its surface, birds chirping and the overall romanticizing of the area, the effects it has on two young Vikings deeply in love with each other will have dramatic effects.

Astrid moaned as Hiccup deepened the kiss by pushing his tongue into her mouth and running his hands along the side of her lithe frame. Astrid let her hands explore his face without restrictions. Feeling the texture of his auburn hair. The rugged impression his locks gave him were exactly how they looked; rough, thin, beautiful and amazing to touch...almost as amazing as the young man who was kissing her now.

Hiccup pushed her gently against the face of the rock and Astrid lifted her leg up to his waist and he gladly held it for her as he ran his hand across her thigh, sending even more indescribable feelings along her body. While he did that she began moving her hands under his shirt so that she could feel his flat-tone abdomen and chest. She was about to remove his shirt when...

"WOAH!" someone yelled, bringing them out of their heated make-out session to see Snotlout and Tuffnut trapped by the net with ten heavy tree branches on top of them.

"Told you it would work" Astrid said looking to Hiccup from the trapped pair, resulting in a short chuckle from him.

Present Time

"It was all an act guys...just to distract you so you would fall for our trap" Hiccup said.

"See Tuff, I told you Astrid would never kiss Hiccup willingly" Snotlout yelled from behind, to which Astrid rolled her eyes.

"Yes Snotlout, I did that so you would get jealous and keep hitting on me" Astrid said in a sarcastic tone.

"Well it worked, because I am never going to stop now" he said.

"You really don't know what sarcasm is do you?" she

asked.

"Sar-what? Oh this is our secret code for I love you Snotlout?" he asked, to which Astrid punched him in the face. They soon reached the beach where they're dragons were waiting for them. Toothless came bounding up to his rider and nearly tackled him to the ground. "Nice to see you too bud" Hiccup said as the dragon nuzzled him.

"Hey Stormfly, that's my girl" Astrid said as she rubbed her dragon's chin.

"Well it's time to tell the others this training exercise is over" Hiccup said and signalled Toothless to shoot a few plasma blasts in the air. Within half an hour, everyone was back on the beachhead, and most of them making fun of how Snotlout and Tuffnut had to wash the dragons for six months.

"You're going to smell even worse than you do now" Ruff commented on her brother.

"Well, I guess I'll reach your level then" Tuff snickered, but soon found himself face first in the dirt with Ruff on top of him.

"So, did you guys get along during our three days here?" Astrid asked Heather and Ripper. They both looked at each other then back at her and Hiccup.

"Yeah, we managed to sort out our differences and made peace," Ripper answered.

"Was it good for you Heather...this whole trip?" Hiccup asked.

"It was...eventful, and yeah I had fun...love to join you guys again on this" she said smiling.

"What's the hold up guys! Let's go!" Snotlout yelled on top of Hookfang.

"What's the matter Snotlout, want to start washing your dragon already?" Fishlegs asked.

"Ok guys, calm down, we're going" Hiccup said, climbing onto Toothless, and soon all the six dragons with their riders were in the air heading back to Berk.

* * *

><p>6 Hours Later - Hiccup's POV

Soon the village was Berk was back in sight, and the dragon riders had a magnificent view of the sun setting behind Berk, basking it in all its glory before the night fell upon the village. We all landed back at the academy where my father was waiting.

"Dad, what are you doing here?" I asked, hopping off of Toothless.

"Well, I was just checking up on the Academy, making sure everything was top shape, but now that you're here, we can leave for that chief meeting at the Bog Burglar's village" he said, clasp my shoulder

with his hammer-like hand.

"Wait, I though you said we would be going in four more days time?" I asked.

"Well, I had a ship ready to depart whenever you all came back because Hiccup, as chief, you'll have a lot of responsibilities, and one of them is to meet with the chief of another tribe not when you feel like it. Besides, this is strictly a trade and route mission. We'll be there 3 days at most" he said.

I looked behind me and saw that most of the riders had already left, except for Astrid who was just by the side with Stormfly. "Is it alright if we leave tonight...I'd like some time alone" I said, hoping he didn't get what I really wanted but by the smile he was giving me, that was false hope. "Just make sure not to lose track of time, and this time, you can be sure you'll be gone for 3 days" he said with a laugh and walked out of the academy leaving me blushing profoundly.

"What was that about?" Astrid asked coming up next to me.

"Uh...it was nothing, just that I have to leave tonight for that trip since we arrived early" I told facing her.

"What!?" she asked, knowing that we just arrived and my dad was already putting me on a ship and sailing off again.

"It won't be that long...he said 3 days at most, and since I'm going with my dad this time, I will be back in three days!" I said, holding her hand, but she still looked skeptical.

"Look, we have the whole evening left to ourselves, and I want to spend it with you since we've never really had time to spend with each other" I said, hoping she would say yes. She had to say yes because she had to agree that we weren't spending as much time together as would've liked to.

"Alright, but I'm expecting our date to be good" she said poking me in the chest and giving her signature grin.

"Well, let's start now...it'll be just the two of us on the other side of the island, you know that cliff where you can see the sun set with all the sea stacks as well?" I asked. No one really thought much about that place. They thought it was like any other cliff that had a view to the sea, but this one was our special hiding place.

"Alright, lead the way" she said, walking over to Stormfly and hopping onto her back, while I climbed onto Toothless and we took off to our spot. Like other times, we couldn't help but engage in friendly competition.

"Bet I can beat you there?" she yelled. She was currently in the front but we both knew that Toothless would easily win, and I wondered why she wanted to go through something that she would lose.

"Really now? Have you forgotten that I'm riding a Night Fury? The fast dragon known to Vikings?" I asked, toying with her.

"Stormfly has certainly improved while you were gone Hiccup, so let's see...and winner gets to _dominate_" she said and immediately shot off into the distance.

"Dominate?" I asked myself, and then my eyes went wide. There was no way I would be losing this one. "Alright bud...let's go!" I said and adjusted his wing into the right position and before you knew it, we were right in front of Astrid and speeding away. Did she honestly think that she could beat me?

"Looks like I'll..." I started when I turned around to look at her but what I saw, there was no way Hel that I expected to see that. She had made Stormfly slow down a bit to get herself into specific position where she had lifted her skirt up and giving me a seductive look. She was wearing her leggings but the sight of her on Stormfly right now. My heart literally stopped beating and I knew my mouth was hanging wide open. But what I didn't realize was that I put extra pressure on my foot which caused the wing to retract and sending me and Toothless spiraling down.

I managed to regain control of the tail and just stopped above the water level. Toothless slapped with his ear for making such a blunder. "Sorry bud...I just" I stopped to look above me to see if Astrid was anywhere, but she wasn't, and the cliff wasn't too far away and that only meant one thing..."I can't believe I fell for that!" I yelled, but I couldn't help but laugh as well.

Toothless grumbled something at me and by the tone of his voice I could tell he was probably saying, _"What on Midgard is wrong with you!? I can't believe you lost the race just because you got excited"._

When the cliff was within view of us, I saw Astrid petting Stormfly, looking all content with the win. _"Here comes the gloating"_ I told myself as we landed.

"Guess I win" she said with a smug look on her face.

"You cheated" I stated simply. Pulling a move like that on a guy who's in love with you? Heck any guy who saw that would have the same outcome as I did.

"Is it really my fault that you couldn't control your urges?" she teased. I could see she was trying to hold back her laughter and it was working for the moment.

"Is it my fault that you look like a Valkyrie?" I retorted. That was the truth however. "You can't just pull a move like that Astrid. That's called a cheap shot" I said.

"No Hiccup, that's called a distraction which all women have been employing to surprise the men as they, including you, can't handle us or me" she said walking up to me. "Besides, this is a cheap shot" she said and she quickly put her left foot behind my right foot, and pulled it off balance that I fell hard on my back with her pinning me down and grinning at me.

"Again, you distracted me with your talking" I said, slightly amused at where this situation was going.

"And what are you going to do about it?" she asked, our foreheads now touching.

"This" I said in a quiet voice and closed the distance between our lips. It was going to be a long night.

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><p>Drago's POV

We had just departed for the Bog Burglars tribe which would be a two day trip by ship. I would use Deathwing if this was a takeover mission, but I don't think it's time for violence...yet anyways. Dagur is definitely disappointed about that. He told me he would have preferred charging in with axes, swords and shouts of war and chop every woman in their path. But what they underestimated about the Bog Burglars were their stealth. They weren't called Burglars for nothing.

But another reason as to why I don't a confrontation happening is because I don't want them to know who I am. I'm going as Dagur's advisor in this situation, and a sort of role model that he has to follow. He can't blow this plan that I'm making.

However, the main reason why I'm going is because one of my scouts told me he saw Berk ships preparing to leave, and from some shipping maps he stole, he saw they had marked a course for the village.

I knew Dagur's history with Hiccup and he wouldn't be all too pleased to see him there, so I'm here to control him. But since I'm going undercover, Hiccup won't know me as well. This is a chance to get on his good side, examine his mental strengths and weaknesses, and most of all, manipulate him.

Because if the tales of him are even close to the truth...then we are exactly alike.

18. Gundarr the Advisor

****A/N:** Hey guys. I hope you all saw the NEW TRAILER for HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 2! It looks so amazing! that I can't believe I have to wait 6 months to see it! Anyway, if you haven't seen it, go on Youtube and watch it now! ******

****And** I've just realized that this story seems to be similar to the movie, with what how Drago in this story is not trying how to learn to control dragons, he's looking on capturing dragons for his own uses. And how the characters look in the trailer, like Hiccup, Astrid and everyone, that's how they're supposed to look in this story.

****By** the way, I REALLY LOVE how they've made the characters look, and especially that moment between Hiccup and Astrid. I think in this movie their relationship might be more serious since they're close to that marriage stage. Anyone agree with me?******

****Anyway,** enjoy and things are about to get tense guys. So PLEASE! LEAVE A REVIEW, and don't worry I'm working on The Past Defines The

Future_. **

It's just now that, from seeing the trailer, it has inspired me to write this story even faster because I want to get to the good parts soon, and the fact that this and the movie are somewhat interconnected, in terms of plot.

**And I have a question that you guys can vote on by leaving a REVIEW. It will be at the end of the chapter. **

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><p>Hiccup's POV

"Don't go too far out son...the Bog Burglars still aren't used to dragons" my dad yelled from the deck of Lightning. I had just taken off with Toothless for him to spread his wings since he was cooped up the whole night on the deck of the ship. The sun had just risen, that the bottom tip of it just grazed the horizon of the sea. We had departed Berk the night before so we could make good time. I had to cut short my time with Astrid.

It was just a simple make-out session, although, she did remove my shirt, and I removed her cloak and spiked skirt...and shoes...and her shirt...and we didn't go that far. We'd be complete idiots to go that far. I'd shame my and her family as it was a sin to consummate outside of wedlock in Viking culture. It was just a make-out session that I wish I could be back at because it's been so long since I had any quality time with her.

In fact, she kept me plastered to her face to prevent me from going, and believe me, there was no other place that I'd rather be, but like my dad said, I have to start taking responsibility for the tribe and going with him on these trading missions, learning what to do and what not to do. That was the whole point of that 2 year trip, to learn to defend myself and be a leader, and I had to show him what I had learned.

But I hated it. I could be out there instead of learning on how to not insult people. Snotlout needs that lesson! I could be out there, in the forest or high up in the sky with Astrid, with no one around but our dragons. Instead I'm learning that I might have to marry someone else. I could be out there exploring new lands. Instead I'm on a trading mission with a village who we have semi-good relations with.

But how can I tell my dad that. He's looking towards me as the leader of this tribe...his successor. He would want me to give up this exploring business and just settle down in Berk and start a family.

Family.

There was only one person I wanted to have one with, and she's back on Berk as the head of the Dragon Academy. She and the others are probably racing about on the dragons again. It's become a major sport in Berk, especially among our little group since you never really know who might win.

I have been thinking about starting a family with her. The ring is

ready; it's only up to me to ask the question that every young man dreads in fear of the answer being no. But why can't my dad let me do it on my own time instead of pressuring me to do it now? It's not like he's going to die tomorrow. I've got time and he has to realize that.

The Bog Burglars tribe soon came into view...it was just like Berk, except there weren't as many cliffs and the weather was a bit warmer. Everything seemed out of the ordinary except for the docks. There were ships there...bigger ships than the ships the Bog Burglars use, and the sails have...Skrill.

_Oh no. _I turned Toothless immediately toward the ship to tell my dad that the Berserkers were at the village.

"What?!" he bellowed as soon as I told him the news.

"You heard me dad, there are Berserker ships docked at their harbour" I repeated. My dad went toward the railing and looked into the distance. It was a clear day and the tribe was already in sight. His eye sight was pretty sharp for someone his age.

"There doesn't seem to be any fire in the village, so they're not here to start a fight. But we have to remain on our guard. Since we no longer have a treaty, any wrong gesture can set off a war, and we both know Dagur will be gunning for that" he said as he turned back to the helm of the ship.

I looked back to the ever-nearing village and couldn't take my eyes off the Berserker ships. If we could see them, then they could most likely see us. After that stunt Dagur pulled, I'm never letting my guard down...if he's on the same island as me...there's no way I'm doing that.

* * *

><p>Drago's POV

"Really, Gundarr? As the _chief advisor_ to the chief of the Berserkers, you think it would be a good idea for that _"loose"_ cannon over there to marry my daughter, Camicazi?" Bertha asked. The group were in the middle of negotiations for the terms of the marriage. Dagur, myself as I had to go under an alias so that they wouldn't know who I really am, Bertha, Camicazi and some of her body guards were in the large hall.

"That is correct chieftess. We see it will be beneficial for both of our tribes to ally ourselves with each other. With the skill and resources that the Bog Burglars have, and the raw power and strength that the Berserkers have, we will make valuable allies. Not to mention your daughter will marry a skilled warrior who will protect her for the rest of his days and nights" I said.

"A skilled warrior who can also take her life whenever he so pleases" she remarked. I turned back to Dagur and saw him smirking, confirming Bertha's thoughts. I looked to her daughter, Camicazi and saw that she was not at all pleased at the situation she was being put in. "You really think I don't know what he did to his father? How he stabbed him 17 times through the heart and paraded his carcass through the village? News spread quick Gundarr, and I don't know how

you can work for a man like him...unless you're the one manipulating him on his actions" she remarked.

"Not even close chieftess. Dagur acted on his own accord and I had no influence over his decisions. I can't say the same about the rest of the Berserkers, but believe me when I say I can be trusted, and I'm the only one here who has power over Dagur" I said, smirking and looking to see Dagur's facial expressions which was quite amusing as it looked like he was about to explode.

"You cannot just come to our village and drop this news on us without informing us previously of this decision so we could have time to think it over" Camicazi spoke. These girls were smarter than I anticipated.

"Which is why we're not forcing you into this marriage madam. We will give you two days to think it over and we will respect your decision whatever the outcome is" I lied. If they refused it, I would storm this village and burn it to the ground.

"Give us time to talk Gundarr" Bertha said. I bowed in respect and walked out with Dagur behind me.

As soon as we were out and among our men Dagur let his rage out. "What the Hel was that!? Respect your decision and leave!? Sometimes I think why I even let you command me" he said as we walked back to his ship.

"Because I could burn your village to the ground and wipe you off the map completely. And don't worry, if they're smart, they'll know that the Berserkers outnumber them 10 to 1, and that they will lose the fight if they refuse the marriage. And if you do marry, you can threaten to kill her and the Bog Burglars will have to comply with whatever we demand of them" I explained.

"I still don't like this idea" he said. I just rolled my eyes in frustration. There was no point in...

"Sir, we have a ship docking" a soldier suddenly informed us. We looked in the direction he was pointing and saw a ship with the Berk symbol on its sails.

"They're here" I stated. We saw a gangplank being set up and saw, who appeared to be Stoick the Vast walking off first, followed by a much thinner and weaker looking Viking with a prosthetic on his left leg. The young Viking appeared to be 19 years old and had auburn hair and was wearing some sort of black armour.

"Hiccup" I heard Dagur grit between his teeth.

"So, that's Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III huh? Killer of the Red Death, and changed the course of history for Berk?" I asked.

"Yes, that's him...the Viking who robbed me of my dragon kill, who humiliated me in front of my men and who stole my Skrill!" he said. He didn't look like much, but then appearances can be deceiving...something I learned when I was 8 and 28.

"We are here to see your Chieftess Bertha about new trade agreements" Stoick said to one of the women who was in charge of the

docks.

"Right this way Chief" she said as she led the group from Berk to the main hall, but they stopped right at us, looking at Dagur with disgust. "What are you doing here?" Hiccup asked.

"We're here on personal business my lords" I said graciously as possible, keeping my character in check.

"You're sure he's not here to kidnap someone again?" the boy called Hiccup asked.

"Ho, you don't even want to know what would have happened if I got away with her Hiccup...just like how you got away with my Skrill" he shot back.

"Son, that's enough, we're here on trading business. We don't need to waste time with him" Stoick said, looking Dagur in the eyes, disgust written all over them.

"Yeah Hiccup, listen to the weak, pathetic man you call a father" Dagur shot back and I slapped him at the back of the head, which the group from Berk saw.

"I apologize for my chief's behaviour gentlemen. Please excuse us" I said pulling Dagur away to avoid further conflict and watched the group continue on their way to the hall.

* * *

><p>"What is the matter with you? Now is not the time to create conflict!" I yelled at him. We were back aboard his ship in his quarters.<p>

"Well sorry if I can't control my anger of the person who humiliated me and stole from me!" he shot back.

"Oh please, you do a fine job of humiliating yourself" I remarked as I looked out of the window. "Bertha will tell them of the plans we have for Camicazi, but there won't be any real solution they can give...unless they also propose a marriage contract to avoid our move on this village" I said, turning back to face Dagur.

"Well then, since this is all your plan, what are you going to do about it?" he asked, resting in his makeshift bed.

"I need to learn more about that Viking, Hiccup. If I can get inside his head, we can win this battle before it even begun" I said with a smile.

Hiccup's POV

"He asked you to what?" Stoick yelled once Bertha had given him the entire news.

"You heard me Stoick, Dagur and his advisor had proposed a marriage contract for Camicazi and have left us two days to make our decision" Bertha explained. My dad was walking in the room with his hand stroking his beard, telling me he was deep in thought.

"So Hiccup, how have you been?" Cami asked me. We were standing on the sidelines while our parents looked over this problem.

"Well, I've been super...can't say the same about you right?" I asked.

"Well I was well before they landed this crap on us...I mean really? Why would they want me to marry him?" she asked, disgust on her face.

"Well you are beautiful, skillful with a weapon and master of stealth, including your wonderful personality" I said.

"You should know after what we did Atlaka" she said giving me a wink to which I blushed.

"Well Ripper was there to put a stop to it before things got _way_ out of hand" I said, laughing as well. "But seriously, why do you think Dagur would arrange a marriage proposal?" I asked.

"Well, his advisor said that it would be good for a woman to be in his life, someone who could control him and teach him to have a...softer side" she replied.

"Yeah, I met his advisor outside. He seems to be a reasonable guy...not one of the traits for a Berserker" I said.

"Ok, the solution I see is to offer another marriage contract and for you to accept" Stoick said sitting down next to Bertha.

"But they said that they would respect our decision and leave if we refused" Bertha replied.

"Well we are talking about the Berserkers and Dagur here. I don't think they take kindly to refusal" I said, and Cami agreed with me.

"But then who else will offer a contract. Plus it has to be someone Cami and I know well. Why not Hiccup?" she asked. My dad, Cami and I looked at each other with, except my dad had a look of _'that's a good idea'_ and Cami and I had one of pure horror.

"Absolutely not!" we both said at the same time.

"See, they already know what each other is going to say" Bertha said with a laugh, as did my dad.

"Mom we cannot marry, we're close friends, but we're not that _close_" she said crossing her arms over her chest, just like Astrid did.

"Plus dad, I'm making my own plans for proposal and it's going to be soon. And don't you know what she would do to me if she finds out I'm getting married?" I asked. I didn't even want to think on what she would do to me.

"A marriage between is out of the question. We have to find another way to do this without provoking them" Cami said.

"(sigh) Alright, we'll discuss more on this tomorrow. I think it's

time you two get some rest" Bertha said. Cami and I nodded and we exited the main hall, leaving her and my dad to discuss some terms of trade.

"Well ever since coming back to Berk my life's been a living Hell. I get a spike of a Whispering Death lodged in my shoulder, broke four ribs, had an arrow hit my leg, Dagur kidnapping Astrid...the Gods do really hate me" I said. Cami laughed at my rant. "Nice to you see enjoying my wonderful fortune" I remarked.

"S-sorry Hiccup" she said. "By the way, how is that Astrid girl, have you made a move on her yet?" Cami asked.

"Not yet, I have the ring ready...I just need to figure out the right time to propose" I said.

"I'm sure she'll love it, especially since it's from you" she said walking ahead of me and turning around.

"Why is that?" I asked.

"Well you're not like conventional Viking men...your smaller, thinner, weaker..." I rolled my eyes at the obvious faults I have. "...But you're also caring, kind, loving, loyal, smart and you never give up easily. If you ask me, she's the luckiest girl on this planet" Cami said.

"Is that spoken from personal experience with me Cami?" I asked. I knew Cami ever since I was about 5 years. She was one of the few people back then who didn't torment me like the others did.

"Yes Hiccup I am. It's amazing how far you've come, and you're just starting out as well. I'd actually hate to see us marry because of this predicament, just to avoid me from marrying Dagur" she said.

"Anyway, I'll see you tomorrow Cami" I said as we stopped in front of her house.

"See yah" she said, giving me a hug, which I returned and she went inside. I began making my way back to the ship when I bumped into Gundarr.

"Oh good evening...out for a nightly stroll?" he asked.

"Not really, on my way back to the ship" I said.

"Would you mind joining me on a walk? I'd like to get to know more about you" he asked. When I looked him over, it was hard to believe that he was working for Dagur. He was tall, the same height as my dad, but not as big as him. However he looked like he could break a barrel in half with one punch. He had a comforting feeling, something that didn't make you stay on edge.

"Sure" I replied and we began our walk around the village.

"So Hiccup, I've heard a lot about you. Care to tell me how it felt to kill the Red Death?" he asked.

I shiver at the mention of that name, "Well...there's not much to

say. I rode Toothless into battle and he did all the work. I just thought of what to do" I answered modestly.

"I mean before that. Tell me about your life on Berk" he said.

"There's nothing much to tell you except that I was a _hiccup_ before I killed the Red Death. I found Toothless a few days before that. It was during a dragon raid when I shot him down with a weapon I made. I was so intent on killing dragons because my dad said my mother was killed by one. I told the villagers and my dad that I shot down a Night Fury...but they all laughed at me, claiming I was an idiot and my dad just took the incident as another failure by my part. I then ran into the forest to search for Toothless, and I found him tangled up in the net I shot. I took my dagger out and was prepared to cut out his heart and take it back to my dad...but I didn't because...and this is going to sound stupid...when I looked into his eyes, I saw myself...someone who the whole world was against and would do anything to get rid of" I said in a quiet voice. Reflecting back on my past was always tough because there weren't any good memories.

"Dagur told me of how he saw these other children torment and bully you when he came with his father on meetings. Is that true?" Gundarr asked.

"Yeah. My cousin Snotlout always beat me up, made fun of me and he had the twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut, to help him. One time they had lured me out into the forest and tied me to a tree. I was left in the forest for over 10 hours before I managed to free myself. When I came back to the village, and this was almost midnight, I didn't see any sign of the village searching for me. They had left me to fend for myself and thought it was a blessing since I went missing since they thought I caused trouble" I explained.

"You know Hiccup, you and I are alike in some ways" he said all of a sudden. This caught my attention.

"How so?"

"Well, back in my old village, before I moved to the Berserker village, I was also a _hiccup_ as you would call it. My mother died giving birth to me and I was basically disowned by my father who was the chief of the village. At the age of 10 I stowed away on a merchant's ship and set sail for Thor knows where. All I wanted was to get away from that village because they saw me as a curse. And at the time I believed them. The merchant found me on his ship and I told him everything. He took me to Atlatka, which was where he lived and raised me as his own. I signed up at the army there and trained for over 15 years, determined to prove that I wasn't a weakling, and that everyone at the village was wrong about me" he explained.

"Did you ever go back to your village?" I asked.

"No. I didn't want to, not after all the abuse I received from them. That is why I am curious about you Hiccup. From what you told me, the village hated you. Your so called friends hated you and now because you killed the Red Death, they're thankful for you?" he asked.

"Seems like that yes. Is there a problem?" I asked.

"Seems to me they just treat you differently now is because they feel bad that they treated you like dirt for 14 years. They're just hoping that you've forgiven all the horrible things they've done to you" he said.

"But I have. That was in the past" I replied. However, what he said did make sense.

"Well Hiccup, it was a nice talk and I'm afraid I have to go now, but think about this for me. Would they have treated you as you are now if you didn't kill the Red Death and if you never shot down Toothless, would you be who you are today or Hiccup the Useless?" he said and turned around to his ship.

What he said did hold a lot of truth and did make me think. What if I hadn't done all of that, would they still see me as Hiccup the Useless? I would go over this while I slept, but I didn't like the thought one bit and the funny thing was...it was all true.

****A/N: Hey guys. Hope you liked the chapter. Anyway this is what I wanted to ask you guys so please leave a review as your answer:****

****Do you guys think it's a good idea to incorporate Hiccup's Mother from the trailer in this story?****

****Leave a review as your answer.****

19. Unexpected Welcoming

Hiccup's POV

I didn't sleep well that night at all. It wasn't because I was home sick or busy thinking on how to propose to Astrid, but it was what Gundarr told me. About how everyone in Berk only treated me nicely now was because of what I did. That they felt bad for themselves for treating me so badly that they're hoping by treating me well now that they're previous years of abuse will be forgotten.

I was also amazed to hear that Gundarr knew how I felt, about him running away because he knew that the villagers and his own father hated him...saw him as a curse. I myself have thought of running away many times, and picturing how the villagers will be celebrating my disappearance, finally glad that Loki's cruel joke was over.

I pulled a small wooden box out of my pocket. I didn't dare keeping it back in Berk in case she found it. I opened it and inside was a beautifully forged gold ring with a diamond, ruby and gem in the middle...small pieces of them of course. It took me three days in total to make this ring. The only time consuming task was the cutting of the diamond, ruby and gem since one small mistake could have shattered them into a million pieces. But looking at this ring made me wonder something else...

..._does she even love me?_

The first time I took on her Toothless was the time where I believe

her feelings for me came forth. But was it that? Could it be that she was only impressed that I had tamed a dragon, and a Night Fury at that? _No._ How could I be thinking these thoughts. I shouldn't. But I can't help but wonder if they're true.

"Son?" my dad called, knocking on the door. I quickly closed the small box and shoved it back in my pocket. "Are you up?" he called again.

"Yeah...yeah I'm up" I called, swinging my legs over the side of the bed and attaching my prosthetic.

"Come on, we still have to discuss the plans with Bertha and Camicazi" he said, and I heard the sound of his footsteps drain away as he walked above deck.

Again he's focusing on the bigger picture and worrying what would happen if Cami were to marry Dagur. If she refused, we all know the expected outcome of that...but if someone else were to offer a contract...wait a minute...Thuggory! He could offer a contract, and the Meathead clan isn't too far off from here!

I quickly ran up onto the deck to find my dad. He was at the helm of the ship, talking with a few of his men.

"Dad!" I yelled as I stopped before him. "I think I know a way for Cami to not marry Dagur" I said. As soon as the words left my mouth I saw his eyes brighten.

"Really? What is it Hiccup?" he asked, grabbing me by the shoulders.

"You know the Meathead clan. Well Thuggory and I are good friends and he's also the age of marrying, so why not have him offer a contract to marry Cami?" I proposed. It only took him a few seconds to take it in all in and I saw the smile that was spreading across his face.

"Hiccup! That is a wonderful idea! I'll go tell Berth while you fly on Toothless to the Meathead village to tell him of what's going on" he said. I nodded and quickly hopped on Toothless and took off for the Meatheads. The Meatheads and Bog Burglars were pretty close to each other, so it only took me an hour to fly there.

* * *

><p>Meanwhile (Drago's POV)

"Sir" Orvon said as he entered his commander's quarters. He was my second in command.

"Yes Orvon, what is?" I asked.

"I just saw the boy and his Night Fury take off. They're heading in a south west direction, most likely towards the Meathead clan" he answered.

"He's obviously come up with a plan to prevent this marriage from happening. (sigh) Very well, I will go to Bertha and tell her the contract is off" I said.

"What!?" came a sound that Drago was growing tired of incredibly fast. "We're just giving up like that? I agreed to this against my own will and now because you think Hiccup is going to get someone else, there is no point to continue?" Dagur yelled slamming his dagger on the table.

"Yes, that is exactly what I'm saying. There is no point to go through with this because Camicazi will obviously say yes to the inevitable man that Hiccup will bring with him. Besides, the only way you can stop a marriage contract is by offering another, and that is exactly what's going to happen. Orvon, prepare the ships to leave by tonight" I said as he got up and walked out of his quarters with Dagur in hot pursuit.

"So that's it? We're giving up?" he asked.

"No, you and Orvon will head back to your village and prepare our forces for attack" I said as I walked into the room where Deathwing was resting.

"So we're finally going to attack?! YES! Finally something I completely agree with" Dagur yelled happily. I could see the twisted happiness in his eyes. He couldn't wait for Hiccup's blood to stain the ground.

"Yes we are, but not until I give the order. I'll be going with Hiccup back to Berk" I said. "I need to gather info on their defenses, and while I'm at it, I could try and get inside his head and instill even further doubt about his village and where his true allegiance lies" I smiled sadistically.

"He will eventually find out what you're trying to do to him you know" Dagur said leaning against a wooden beam.

"He doesn't know who I am yet. He only knows me as someone he can relate to during his childhood, and that's what I'm counting on" I said as I rubbed Deathwing's chin. "Besides, with what I expect to happen, we will be able to take Berk and its dragons with no fight if they don't have their brave leader to guide them" I said.

"So we're gonna kill Hiccup?" he asked enthusiastically.

"No, he's going to run away from the village on his accord" I said.

"How can you be so sure?"

"I am because it's what I'd do if I were in his position...which I was"

* * *

><p>Hiccup's POV

I can't believe Thuggory said yes and that his family agreed with it to stop the Berserkers from getting what they want. The marriage would take place two weeks from now and as soon as I delivered the news to my dad, Bertha and Cami, they were all ecstatic that there would be no marriage with Dagur. My dad complimented me on my new

found diplomatic skills at negotiating a marriage between two villages when he wasn't even there. But I doubt those skills because Cami, Thuggory and I are all friends who spent time together in Atlaka. The two of them got to know each other well and it would work out if they were to get married.

Cami never let go of me as soon as I told her she wouldn't have to marry Dagur and she's glad she's marrying someone she knows and is doing it for the sake of her pride and not letting her marry a lunatic.

With all that work done, it was time for us to go back home. I was on the ship with Toothless and my dad when Gundarr requested to come aboard.

"You want to come with us to Berk?" my dad asked.

"Yes. I've never been to Berk and rest assured, Dagur and no other Berserker will be accompanying me, so you have nothing to worry about" he said with a smile.

"I don't see any harm in it. Why not? Gundarr, you're welcome to join us to Berk" my father said, clapping him on the shoulder to which he nodded his thanks.

"So Hiccup, I couldn't help but notice you took off this morning. Do you ride a dragon?" he asked, as we set sail for Berk.

"Yes I do in fact. His name is Toothless...yes I know, seems to be a silly name but you'll understand once you meet him" I said as I lead him below deck to Toothless' room. When I opened the large door, I saw him laying by the wall and he immediately perked his head up as soon as I entered and bounded over to me and started nuzzling.

"Wow, he looks impressive" Gundarr said standing by the door.

"He is. We've been through a lot together, so much that he's my best friend" I said standing up.

"Ah yes, I've heard stories about you back at Atlaka. How there was this boy with a Night Fury and their bond was of legend" he said.

"Yeah, well, it's something like that. I wouldn't know what to do without him" I said.

What I said was 100% true about Toothless. He was there when times were tough, he was my _first_ friend and never left my side and he was always there for me whenever I needed him the most. Come to think of it, Toothless accepted me with my faults and never judged me, unlike the rest of the village.

"So how long till we reach Berk" he asked, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"Not that long, we should reach there my nightfall" I said.

* * *

><p>Berk - Night Time, Drago's POV

We arrived at Berk fairly quickly and it was just like every other Viking village that I've seen, except with more cliffs. Except this village had dragons all over the place. They were resting on top of buildings, walking about with Vikings and playing with children. It was almost scenic. It would be a shame to burn Berk to the ground. Hopefully they know what's good for them and surrender without an bloodshed.

"Well how do you like it so far?" Hiccup asked as we got off the ship and started walking.

"Well it seems pretty scenic here. Never seen so many dragons like this" I lied about the dragon part.

"Yeah well, if you don't do anything to provoke them, they won't harm you" he said.

He kept glancing to his pocket and I saw a small outline, of a box of some sort pressed against it. "Do you need to go somewhere?" I asked.

"Yeah, you see this?" he said pulling out the small box. "It's a small project I've been working on and I nee to just finish it up at the forge" he said.

"You know you can go finish it up. I can see your Main Hall from here. I'll go up there and meet you when you're done. Maybe then you could introduce me to some of your friends" I said.

"Thank you" he said quickly running off with his dragon by his side to the forge.

I took another look around the village. There were not many defenses, save for a few catapults here and there and the fact that they were on a cliff gave them an excellent vantage point. It would be difficult...

BOOM!

I heard an explosion and felt the shockwave it created. I quickly looked to where the bright yellow flash came from and saw the forge on fire, over three quarters of it had collapsed in. People started gathering around and some were rushing to fill in water buckets to put out the fire.

"Was anyone in there?" Stoick shouted. That's when I remembered...Hiccup had gone in there.

"Hiccup's in there!" I yelled, actually afraid something happened to him. That's when I saw a look of pure horror come upon Stoick's face. "Get that water here now!" he yelled as he took full control of the situation. All of a sudden we saw Toothless bounding out with Hiccup on his back, out of the portion of the forge that was still standing, but collapsed a few seconds as soon as they came out.

Stoick immediately ran up to the dragon and pulled Hiccup off him to check him, and everyone including the Chief gasped at what they saw. I made my way to the front and saw why...

Half of the left side of his face was _burned. _

**A/N: I know this chapter was rushed and everything and I'm sorry for that, but we're just getting to the good stuff and be prepared for all the drama to come. **

**Also please leave a review. I know _The Past Defines The Future_ was successful because of the plot and the romance, action and adventure, but all that is right round the corner for this story, so please review as it tells me that this story is getting good responses. **

20. Realization

Hiccup's POV

Why does every part of my body hurt? I thought as I opened my eyes and surveyed my surroundings. From the looks of it I appear to be in Gothi's sick bay, but I don't remember why. All I remember at first was a white flash in front of me and then blackness.

"Gah!" I yell when I brought my hand to the left side of my face. "Why does that hurt!?" I yell, bringing my hand much slower and gentler to my face than I did before.

"Because half of your left side is burnt" I heard a voice say. I immediately started looking around. There was no light in the room, except for a few candles. "I'm over here" the voice said again and I turned to the shadows from where it came from and saw Gundarr step out.

"Gods you scared me" I said holding my chest. "Why is no one else in here?" I asked.

"Because your healer...Gothi, I think her name was...told no visitors allowed until midday tomorrow" he replied.

"Wait, if she said no visitors how come you're in here?"

"You remember when I told you I trained in the army?" I nodded. "Well I trained as a scout, assassin, enforcer, commander, captain, basically all the positions. That's how I got in here without anyone noticing" he replied, a small smile on his face.

"Well that is impressive, but why are you here? I mean...wouldn't you be in the Hall with everyone else?"

"You could say I was worried about you. How's your face?" he asked.

"Uh...hurts if I touch it. Did you happen to overhear what Gothi said about healing?" I asked, hopeful it wouldn't leave a permanent scar. I already had one of those.

"She said the damage _isn't_ permanent, but it will take time to heal, give or take two months at the most" he replied. "She had placed a healing mixture on the burnt skin to prevent any infection and to subdue some of the pain, so watch it" he informed.

On the desk to my left, I saw a small mirror. Curious as to how my face looked, I took it and held it in front of the left side of my face. It wasn't as bad as I thought. The lower half of the left side was burned. There were some dark spots here and there which should heal with time and leave no trace of this incident ever occurring in the first place.

"Hiccup, what do you remember before the explosion?" he asked.

"I went into the forge, I set up the fire. I was working on a sword for a special occasion and I needed to melt some more steel. The fire wasn't hot enough so I went up to the furnace and you know that device that helps blow air into the fireplace to help increase the intensity and heat of the fire?" he nodded. "When I pressed that with full force, there was a white flash and I think I must have been knocked out" I said, finishing my explanation.

"This seems to match what they were planning" I heard Gundarr say under his breath.

"Wait who?! Did someone try to kill me? Was it the Berserkers!?" I asked, starting to panic.

"Calm down Hiccup. No, it wasn't the Berserkers, but I think I know who did this" he said, and I could see the disappointment in his eyes.

"Who? Who did this?"

"Your friends" he answered.

"What? My friends! They did this?! No, no, he's obviously trying to cover for a Berserker attack" I thought. "No, they would never do this to me. They would never do something that would endanger my life!" I yelled. Him accusing my friends of something of this scale was just disgusting.

"Refuse to believe me all you want, but I swear on Oden's beard that I overheard them talking about it after you were brought here" he said, sticking to his story and his voice never had any hint of lying.

"Are you sure that it was my friends?" I asked. I still didn't believe him.

"Yes. One big young man with blonde hair, a shorter man with thick black hair, but a lot more muscular, a another man of the same height with long blonde hair and two girls" he said.

"What? Two girls?! No, she couldn't have been in on this? She couldn't!" "A-A-Are you sure?" I asked again.

"Yes, I believe their names were Fishlegs, Snotlout, Tuffnut, Ruffnut and..."

"No, don't say it, don't say it. PLEASE!"

"...Astrid". He said it. She was in on this! She was in on this!? My mind couldn't wrap itself around the situation. How could the person I loved for over 10 years, the person who was there for me when

Toothless was taken, and the person I plan to propose to be on this _sick_ prank?

"No. I refuse to believe what you have just said. Astrid would never be in on a prank that could leave me scarred or seriously injured" I said. My voice was raised. I didn't like the accusations he was saying one bit at all. But there was some part of me, and it was growing, that said maybe it was true.

"Why are you so focussed on Astrid out of the five? Is she something special?" he asked. I didn't answer. That's when I saw the look that he realized what's going on. "You love her don't you, and I'm guessing by your reaction she loves you back...or it would appear so" he remarked.

"_Don't. Don't_ you say that!" I snapped. "She is not like the others. Me and her, we have something special! She would have told me about the prank if she knew. She wouldn't have kept quiet and let me suffer" I yelled.

"Like she did until you found Toothless?" he countered. I stopped in my defense of her. "From what you told me, your so called _friends_ pushed you around when you were younger. They beat you up, humiliated you countless in times in front of the village, and I'm making a pretty good guess that she was also part of this to a lesser extent. But she ignored you, claimed that you weren't a Viking at all, and right now she's just captured your heart knowing the benefits of marrying the chief's son!" he exclaimed.

"No...No...Stop it" I said covering my years.

"I mean she would obviously know that her family would be set for life if she married you. And come on Hiccup, all of a sudden when you've trained a dragon, she _starts_ to see who _you_ really are? That's a bit suspicious if you ask me. She only did this knowing that _she'll_ be set for life...not that she was doing this out of love for you. And besides what about your village?" he pressed on.

"No...Please...Stop" I begged as I was being hit from the dirty truth all around.

"They only realized their mistake _after_ you were nearly _killed_. They realized that their treatment of you until that moment was wrong. And after that, they were just trying to repent themselves by being nice to you. They weren't doing it because they knew it was the right thing to do...they were doing it for _themselves_. I bet my life that they would have continued treating you the same way...everyone for that matter, your father, friends...Astrid, they would have continued treating you the same, miserable, cruel way if you never met Toothless and if you never killed the Red Death" he finished.

I curled up into a ball on the bed. I pressed my knees against my chest and covered my years...wishing I didn't hear that. But then, all those memories came back to me in one full swing. "I don't know what we're going to do with you...You have to stop being you!"..."Look at him he's just a weakling. I can't believe he's Stoick's son. Doesn't take anything after him"..."I don't know why you're even in this world. You're a curse Hiccup and you'll always be

one"...I saw her watching from the sidelines as Snotlout and the twins shoved my head in a barrel of fish. I saw her standing there with pity in her eyes, just watching and doing nothing..."You're not my son! You're not a Viking"..._

That's when something inside me _snapped_. I released my hands from my ears, my breathing was hard and fast...obviously all the anger that I should have had for the village treating me the way they did. "But you still have one friend Hiccup...someone who accepts you for you and treated you like family in those few days than the village treated you in 14 years" Gundarr said, and he moved aside to reveal Toothless, who walked up slowly to me and started nuzzling me, making sure I was alright.

"I let him in because I know you need him" he said. I didn't pay any attention as I hugged Toothless. "Anyway, I'll let you get your rest. You'll need it" he said and I heard the door close behind him. I looked to the mirror once again...seeing the damage that my _friends_ inflicted upon me. I was a damn _fool_ to think the village saw me for me...that they're treating me nicely in order to repent themselves for the wrongs they did to me all those years. Then in all my anger, I threw the mirror at the other end of the room and saw it shatter into a million pieces.

Toothless glanced back worryingly at me. "I'm ok bud, just need to step outside" I said, fixing my prosthetic and grabbing my leather helmet. Toothless stood by so I could lean on him and we walked outside. It was pretty dark outside, I'm guessing it was about midnight but right now I just wanted to get away from the village, so me and Toothless headed for the forest, something that had been sanctuary for a long time.

I must have been wondering about for ten minutes before I heard some chatter going on. I followed it and Toothless and I hid behind a bush, his black scales and my black armour making us almost invisible and I saw the whole gang...including Astrid...talking over what was obvious...the explosion in the forge and how I was in it.

"Ok, I have got to say, that was the best 50 gold I ever spent with Trader Johann to buy that...what was it called...?" he started off.

"...Fireworks" Fishlegs finished for him.

"Yeah, I mean...did you see how the forge exploded...and all the colours...best explosion I've seen by far" Tuff added in.

Yeah the best explosion that could have killed me.

"You guys do know Hiccup was in the forge and did you see his injuries?" Fishlegs asked.

"You do know he was the main target in this prank right?" Snotlout said. So Gundarr was telling the truth...my _friends_ were behind this!

"I wasn't sure hoe much of that explosive powder to use so I used all of it...and I'm telling you it was worth it" he said.

"You know I heard over some talk that Hiccup caused the

explosion...that he must have handled something wrong and ended blowing up the forge" Ruff said.

"That's good for us...he takes the blame as usual and we get off free. You know we can also keep spreading that rumour how Hiccup messed up again and blew the forge this time" Snotlout said.

My blood was boiling so much at hearing my friends trying to pin the blame on me for something I didn't even do. Gundarr was right about them...they're not my friends...and for the village to start saying that I caused the explosion...they're acting just like before...blame everything bad that happens on Hiccup.

"So Astrid, why are you quiet?" Ruff asked. Yes, why was she quiet, I would certainly love to hear her thoughts.

"I was just thinking about Hiccup's injuries" she said in an almost...jovial tone.

"Oh, so since he is permanently scarred for life, what are you going to do?" Snotlout asked. Obviously he thought I would be a walking monster with half of my face scarred, and he was hoping Astrid would be attracted to him now.

"I don't know Snotlout. Well let me see...since half of his face burned I shouldn't love him anymore...that is if I even did love him to begin with. Maybe I'll start to ignore him like I did before because he's obviously not worth it if he's gone back to his old self and started blowing things up! Maybe I'll just break up with him to hurt him even more!" she said, and what really hurt...she said it in a normal tone...not a mad one. That was it.

I gestured Toothless to start heading back to the village. They all thought I was the old Hiccup again. They all hated the idea of having the old Hiccup again, and I was feeling it...How could Astrid even say those things? I mean, after what we've been through...I guess Gundarr was right about everything...I don't belong here...I never belonged here.

Toothless took me back home...I needed to collect some things before I left...however coming home proved even further cause to leave.

"Are you sure you think Hiccup did this?" my dad asked.

"Well he was the only one in the forge when it happened sir" Spitelout spoke.

"I know Hiccup Stoick, and he surely wouldn't have done that. He's my apprentice, I taught him everything he knows and he is too skilled to make that mistake" Gobber spoke. At least I have someone who stands up for me.

"Even further cause to believe that Hiccup caused this explosion sir. It will take us nearly a month to rebuild the forge sir, and with devastating winter approaching we might not have the time" Spitelout said. "There's even talk about the village that Hiccup put something in the fire that caused the explosion" he finished.

"Thank you Spitelout, have a good night, I'll finish here" my dad

said as he bid Spitelout goodbye.

"What do you think Stoick?" Gobber asked as he came back and sat down.

"I don't know Gobber...if Hiccup's returned to his old self...I don't know what we'll do...and I thought he grew up on that trip. Guess I was wrong" he said. Wow. Even my own father is having his feelings of the old Hiccup return. I guess everyone is. I quietly climbed into my room from the outside to grab a few stuff. There was no point in staying here anymore, not when the entire village is beginning to hate you again.

I climbed back out and walked to the village centre, where the forge was. I stood before it and gazed at it. Snotlout really did use too much. I'm lucky I survived.

"Hiccup?" I heard a voice all too familiar and right now hated...Astrid.

"What are you doing out of Gothi's sick bay. You should be resting" her voice sounds so caring...too bad for her I don't believe a single word of it.

"Oh...just taking a midnight stroll if you must know" I reply harshly back at her.

"Hiccup, please tell me what's wrong...I'm here for you" she said. I heard her footsteps getting closer. "Hey guys, it's Hiccup" I heard Fishlegs. Wonderful the whole gang is here. Perfect.

"Really? You're here for me?" I said turning around so they could all see what they did to me. I saw Astrid stop in her footsteps, obviously shocked at my injury. "What's the matter Astrid? Too ugly for you?" I ask.

"Wha-Hiccup, no...why would you think that?" she asks. Her eyes seem full of concern for me...oh how I know never to trust them again.

"I don't know...maybe because that you'll break up with me because of how I look!" I yell at her. I've never done that before but with what I heard they said about me, I don't give a damn anymore.

"What!? No, why would I do that?!" she yells back.

"You know, I'm actually wondering why you even love me...if it's love at all" I remark. That's when I see the hurt on her face. I hear doors opening and people coming out. They were obviously stirred because of the commotion.

"Hiccup Horrendous Haddock...how could you even say such a thing! You know I love you!" she yelled. We were just an arm's length apart now.

"Really, because six years ago you didn't give a shit about me!" I yelled. This definitely caught her by surprise. "Then all of a sudden, when I started beating you in Dragon Training, only then did you start to notice me...only then you realized I existed. But no, when you found out I trained a dragon and when I took you on that ride, only then you thought I was something more...or was it Astrid?"

I bet you were acting in your own personal gains of marrying a chief's son because he trained the most feared dragon known to Vikings. Maybe you did it because you knew how much money you'd get!" I yelled. I definitely hit a nerve because as soon as I knew it, I felt a tremendous pain on my left side of my face and fell one knee onto the ground, clutching where she punched me.

"How dare you say that! I love you Hiccup...I always have...so much that I would never..." she stopped when she looked at her right knuckles. There were blood stains on it. She looked back at me and saw me clutching my left cheek and only then realized that she had injured me. I pulled my left hand away and saw blood completely staining my left hand. I looked back at and saw in her eyes that she had made a dreadful mistake.

"Hiccup...I-I...I'm so sorry..." she started coming towards me but I raised my hand to stop her, and slowly got up.

"If you loved me, then why didn't you tell me that Snotlout was planning that joke on me!" I yell. That's when the look on her face and the other teens' faces came to the realization that I had heard their conversation.

"You kept quiet...not even meeting me at the docks to give me a warning but no...you let his prank work and I was nearly killed! If you really loved me, you would have told me!" I yell. I saw the tears coming to her eyes.

"Hiccup...she was searching for you to..." Fishelgs started but I was sick of it.

"No! Not one word out of you!" By now the whole village was watching the confrontation, and my dad and Gobber had also shown up.

"Hiccup I..." Astrid said grabbing my arm but I pushed her back. She must have been caught off guard because she fell onto the ground. Ruffnut came up to her friend's side. "What is wrong with you!?" she asked.

"Me? What's wrong with me?! Oh...I'll tell you what's wrong...this entire village! I heard how talk was going around that I blew up the forge. All of you thought that you would get the old, useless Hiccup back! And you know what else I realized, that you all don't love me!" I screamed looking around at the village.

"Son that's not true..." my dad started but I cut him off.

"Save it. I heard you talking about how worried your were of having the old me back. And then I realized how all of you treated me before I found Toothless. How you all abused me, treated me like an Outcast, dented my morality, claiming that I was not a real Viking! It only took me nearly dying for all of you to realize the error of your ways...so much that you all hoped by treating me nicely would cancel out the years of abuse I received at the hands of my own village!" I screamed.

"Son...please calm" my dad started again.

"Don't you dare call me son...Stoick" I said, and I saw the hurt on his face when I called him by name. "I know that from the moment I

was born you thought you had the wrong son. All those years where I tried to prove myself to you...prove that I am a Viking...you shunned me...you disowned me...and just like everyone else, it took me nearly dying for you to realize your mistake! That's what everyone in this village saw me...as a mistake...a cruel joke Loki put you under. And every time that I went missing and never came back, I heard all of you say how it was a blessing, that you wished I was gone! Even you...my own father...admitted it was nice not having me around!" I yelled at him. All my anger was coming out now.

"What the heck is going on...What in the name of Oden happened to your face?" Ripper asked coming through the crowd and up to me.

"Ask them" I said pointing to all the teens. "Hiccup please...listen..." Astrid started but I had had enough of it.

"No you listen...when we were small you wanted nothing to do with me...even if you were on fire and I had the only bucket of water around for a hundred miles, you still wouldn't come near me...that was your mentality towards me...and now when I nearly died, only then you realized your feelings for me!" I yelled. She seemed to have taken it hard as she began letting out a few sobs.

I sighed, tired of my own outburst but I wasn't done there...I wasn't done hurting her. I pulled out the small wooden box, "I paid Trader Johann, when he was in Atlaka, 2500 gold to find the purest gold with no impurities and the most precious diamond. It was all the gold I had at the time. Six months later he came back with the two items and I was more than thankful. I told him I wished I could pay him extra, but instead he gave me a ruby and a gem, saying that what they were for, he was more than happy to help with. I couldn't thank him enough. Then when I came back...I spent 3 days working on making this" I said holding up the box to my face.

"I guess it was a bloody waste of time!" I said and threw it in front of Astrid. I could see her hands trembling while she picked up the box, guessing what was inside it. Her thought was confirmed when she burst into tears as she let the box fall down with the lid open and everyone gasped at what they saw. It was a gold ring, the purest they had ever seen with a small pieces of a diamond, a blue ruby and a red gem in the middle and the initials of 'A +H Forever' engraved in the gold ring. Ruffnut hugged her weeping friend even closer than before. Only then did the teens realize what they had really done...and Astrid paid the price for it.

"Hiccup, please calm down" Ripper said grabbing my arm but I yanked it away.

"No, I'm done with this village" I said as I mounted Toothless and turned towards the moonlit horizon. I could hear Astrid crying in the back and I almost felt bad for her..._almost_.

"A village is supposed to feel like a home, where people accept you for who you are...despite your faults. They don't abuse you, they don't beat you up, they love you no matter what, and they will always be by your side" I said not looking at anyone.

I turned around and looked at Astrid and she laid her eyes on me...begging me silently not to go.

"I had no home here" I said looking at her and took off. I don't know where I would go or how long it would be before I came across another village...all I did know was that I would never return to this place again.

Meanwhile, on a cliff... (Drago's POV)

I saw the whole event unfold before him and couldn't help but smile. When I heard Hiccup throw the mirror against the wall at the healer's, I knew he had broken through. I had discovered Hiccup's weakness...his emotions and took full advantage of them.

A dragon landed beside me with my second in command, Orvon riding him. "Sir, the forces are ready, they are just 50km east" he said.

"Good Orvon"

"Seems like Hiccup gave them something to think about" he said, observing the Hooligans' damaged morality, and the crying fiancÃ©e.

"Yep he did. If you ask me though, they deserved it" I said, looking at them with disgust. "We'll attack in four days time. Until then have your best scout conduct recon missions to assess their morality over the next few days" I said.

"Of course sir, but why four days?"

"Let the people of Berk come to terms with what they've done to Hiccup. They deserve it"

21. Make Him Feel Like the Monster

Ripper's POV

I saw Hiccup take off on Toothless and leave to Oden knows where. And I didn't even realize what had happened. I was on the other side of the village disarming dragon traps. And when I return to the village, I see Hiccup losing his mind with everyone. I turned around to see Astrid weeping on the ground uncontrollably with Ruffnut trying to comfort her the best she could.

"Will someone please tell me what the heck is going on!?" I yell. Whatever they did to piss Hiccup off that much, I had to know it. I spent over 2 years with Hiccup, and I grew close to him, close enough to know how he handles situations and know how I have to respond to him based on them.

"How the Hel did Hiccup get that burn on his face?" I asked again. No one answered. That's when I remembered that Hiccup said to ask the gang.

"What did you do Snotlout?" I asked him, walking up to him, that our faces were inches apart.

"I-I...I didn't mean to..." he couldn't find the words.

"What. Did. You. Do?" I asked again.

"It was supposed to be a small joke...I only bought an ounce of fireworks from Johann...I-I didn't realize it would have that effect..." he stopped as he looked to everyone in the crowd who were staring daggers at him.

"He heard our conversation in the forest" Fishlegs started. I turned to him, intent on listening. "He was there when he heard Astrid say those things...but she didn't _mean_ it" he said. I saw he began to tremble all over.

That's when Astrid all of a sudden jumped from Ruffnut's arms and ran...not before punching Snotlout to the ground. She ran directly to her house, and I could see her tears stain the ground as she ran. I looked back to where Hiccup took off. "What have you done?" I asked.

Astrid's POV

I ran...and ran...and ran to my house, without looking back at the crowd behind me. What he said was true...all true. I did ignore him when we were younger, I did sometimes join in making fun of him...I was stupid. So _damn stupid!_

I ran to Stormfly's pen. She immediately got up and I got on top of her and we took off into the night sky. I didn't want to stay here, to have all of them see me cry. They already saw enough. I flew to our special place...or what used to be our special place. I landed Stormfly there and when I got off I collapsed crying again. _Oh Hiccup, I'm so sorry!_ I kept repeating that phrase inside my head.

Only if you had stayed longer in that conversation...

Flashback

I couldn't believe what those idiots did! Why in the name of all that is good and decent would they pull that joke on them. We were in the forest now and they were talking about the explosion. I should be by Hiccup's side instead of here, but I wanted to know _why_ they would endanger his life.

Hearing how they would put the blame on Hiccup in some way sickened me. How could Snotlout do that to his own cousin!?

When Ruff asked me why I was being quiet, it's because I was so mad at them, so I put up a fake expression. I told them I was thinking about Hiccup's injuries because I wanted to be there with him, waiting for him to wake up, praying to the Gods that he would live and it wasn't serious and when he did, I would never leave his side. I lied about how I loved him when Snotlout asked me that question because I was sick of him. This was the last time I ever hang out with them. When I was done with my rant I tackled Snotlout to the ground and started beating him senseless!

"You self-absorbed piece of yak crap!" I yelled as I got up. "You all should be ashamed of yourselves! Why would you do that to Hiccup? What has he ever done to you?" I asked. I turned to Snotlout who was just getting back up after I laid a beat down on him.

"Is this hoping that Hiccup got injured and that I'd fall for you?" I asked. If he said yes, I would impale him with my axe right then and there.

"No...it was supposed to be a joke. He should have just got a small scare...I didn't mean the for the entire forge to blow up" he said.

"Then why are you suggesting of blaming him for everything!? Just because it's easier?!" I yelled. He hung his head down.

"I can't believe you guys. I'm heading to be by Hiccup's side and when he wakes up, I'm going to tell him _everything_" I told them and stormed off to find him.

Present Time

I fell to my knees in the exact same place where we made out two days earlier. I felt the soft grass below me, the images of his hands running along my side, the feel of his lips on mine, the love I felt when I was with him...all gone. Gone, when he didn't give me a chance to explain. But then even I wouldn't have wanted to listen to what I had said, even though I was being sarcastic.

And what hurt the most...was that he was planning to propose to me. It would have been a dream come true to marry him. I always imagined the day of me being under the alter with him, saying our vows, and sealing it with a kiss. And on that same night, we would have been truly able to call each other husband and wife. But now, none of that is going to happen. Because I opened my big yap without even considering that he was there.

Looking back on what he said, on how I never cared for him...I did. I. Did! I was just too scared to confess them. I wanted him to be a successful Viking. I wanted to be there to help him stand on his feet. I wanted him to know that there was someone in the village who did care for him. But I was weak.

I was scared on how people would view me. I was scared that I would be treated the same way. I guess I'm paying for my decision I made 9 years ago. That ride on Toothless confirmed my feelings for him. They were always there, but the ride confirmed that Hiccup was a Viking...probably the most successful Viking out of all of us. Only after that magical ride, did I see what he was _truly_ capable of. That he was the strongest Viking out of all of us; someone who stood up for what he believes in, who was willing to go down fighting protecting the ones he loved. When he lost his leg, I was so heartbroken. Hearing him scream when they were amputating his leg, I could feel my heart being torn. We were just 14 and he was losing his leg for doing the right thing. If that's not honour and loyalty I don't know what is. If I could take back what I said in that conversation I would give my soul to Loki just to take it back.

I looked into the distance, where the moon was setting just between the sea stacks and I saw a small figure, with wings, getting smaller as it flew away, and I knew it was Hiccup..

"Please come back Hiccup...Please come back" I sobbed, knowing he would never hear me again.

Ripper's POV

I picked up the ring that Hiccup made. I didn't want to replay the events that he did, effectively ending his love for Astrid, and showing that to her...she didn't deserve it. No one deserved that.

I looked in the direction that Hiccup left. He would be long gone now since he would have sped Toothless at his maximum speed to get away as fast as possible. But I knew him...he wouldn't travel to a village just yet...not after what just happened. He would be extremely tired psychologically, and would hop from island to island every other day or so. I will find him...but not now.

"You four" I heard Stoick say. I turned around him and he was pointing to the four teens. "All four of you are under house arrest until I find a suitable punishment for you" he said. I could see a tear stain in his eye. Must have happened when Hiccup called him Stoick, the worst name a son can call his father. "Everyone...as you were" he said and turned around to his house.

The crowd that had gathered dispersed slowly, only leaving me and the whole gang, except for Astrid in the centre of the village.

"I hope you're all happy" I said. "You not only damaged Hiccup physically, you went beyond that. You made him feel useless again, and you broke a lot of relationships doing that" I said, looking at the ring.

"I didn't want to be a part of this! I only overheard Snotlout talking about it, and I warned him not to do it!" Fishlegs said.

"Clearly he doesn't listen" I snapped.

"We can't worry about Hiccup right now, he'll be fine...it's Astrid I'm worried about" I said. She ran off into the darkness, not sure if she went home or she ran away. But one thing is for sure, when I find Hiccup...I am dragging him back here...whether he likes it or not.

Just then I saw Stoick heading in our direction. "Have any of you seen Gundarr, he's an advisor of Dagur. He came with us to Berk" he said.

"No, I wasn't here for the whole day, so I don't know what he looks like" I said.

"Oh, you don't have to worry" we heard a voice say. We all turned out heads up to see said man on the roof of a house. "Gundarr how did you get up there?" Stoick asked. We saw him smirk. That's when I realized something. We saw him on the roof, but the way his body showed him, he was sitting, but on the roof...

He shot up on, and I can't believe it, a dragon and landed in front of us. We all stared in awe at the sight before us. He was riding a Night Fury, but this one was different. It was bigger than Toothless, about 10 feet longer, it stood taller and it appeared to have more armour plating on its back and a scar over its right eye. "What is this Gundarr?" Stoick asked.

"(evil chuckle) Oh Stoick, the name's Drago Bloodfist" as soon as he said his name, we all gasped.

"Well it's nice to know that you've heard of me" he commented getting off his dragon.

"Yes we have...all the stories that have been spread from the east, how villages have been burned down, men, women and children slaughtered...I thought it was all a myth, but turns out it was true" Stoick said, stepping in front of us. Clearly he didn't like this man and knew what he was capable of.

"Wait, you're Drago Bloodfist? Son of Daedra Bloodfist? What would your father say if he saw you now" I said. I heard stories about his father, how loving and peaceful he was...but I never knew he had a son...a monster for a son at that.

"Oh it's hard to say...he's buried under 12 feet of dirt along with his dragon...and I don't think he's still alive since I beat him for control of the village. But I didn't stop there. You see...I was like Hiccup, I was seen like an outcast in that tribe, so much that my peaceful and loving father also didn't know what to do with me. I ran away, and nearly 20 years later...I came back to claim my position as chief. I battled my father and won...but I didn't stop there, I slowly killed him, stabbing him in every part of his body making sure he suffered, before I turned my dragon on his...it was quite a sight" he said smiling as he withdrew his sword. That's when I realized something...

"You spoke to Hiccup" I said. My fear was confirmed when he smirked at me.

"I did...I showed him the error of his ways...I helped him release his anger" he said.

"You...You did this to him" Stoick charged him but Gobber got a tight hold of him, preventing him from doing something he would regret.

"Wrong Stoick...you and everyone in this village already scarred him. I only helped him see what he should have...that all of you took him for granted. When he killed the Red Death, and when you all thought he died, only then did you realize the value he was worth. It took him nearly dying for you to realize he was a true Viking" he lectured.

"And we sought so hard to show him that we were sorry. We know he doesn't deserve us, and yet he forgave us...but you came in and manipulated his emotions against us...made outrageous claims that before he knew were false. I don't know what you said but it clearly put him against us" Stoick said.

"I did what I would have done...I made him see that he doesn't need you...he doesn't need the village that abused him for over half of his life. He can make his own man, and he can do it away from this village" he said walking up to us.

"Why are you here?" Fishlegs asked.

"I'm here to make sure Berk doesn't stand in my way...and getting rid of Hiccup was the first step" he said with a smile. "But if you really do know what I'm capable of, then you'll know that I can burn Berk to the ground and that you won't fight back" he said.

"After what you did...turning my son against his own people, his own father...his own love...why should we bow down to you" Stoick challenged.

"If you want what's good for your people, then you will accept my proposals...because I can easily take you down in a night" he said, and from the look in his eyes, he was dead serious.

"(sigh) What do you want?" Stoick asked, knowing there was no way out of this.

"Well I need total cooperation from Berk, and a deal to sign that is through a marriage" he said. We all looked up, and from his smile, it wasn't going to be good.

"A marriage with Astrid Hofferson" he said.

"You son of a half-troll!" Ruff yelled as she tried to charge him but Fishlegs pulled her back.

"Do you know the hurt you've caused her...Hiccup took all his anger out on her, and if you're a monster as you say you are...then you watched everything unfold before you...please don't do this to her" I begged. She didn't deserve this misery.

"I'll give you four days to break the news to her and she has to accept it...otherwise my army, from the air and sea will attack, and she will watch as her village is burned down. I will be in Berk with my dragon, and my forces will arrive in 4 days time, and by then, if there is no marriage...you all will pay" he said as he turned to mount his dragon and with one push of its wings was up in the air and flying to some part of the island.

"What are we going to do?" Tuff asked.

"There's only one thing we can do...tell Astrid and pray she says yes...despite her current state" Stoick said.

I looked back in the direction Hiccup left. "If Hiccup were here, we would have stood a chance" I said solemnly. I walked in the direction Drago went...I needed to ask him a few more questions.

After about 20 minutes of searching, I found him overlooking the docks of Berk, with his dragon by his side, who turned around and snarled at me as I approached.

"Easy Deathwing...he poses no harm to me" he said placing a hand on the dragon's snout and turning to face me. "If you've come here asking why I'm doing this I'll explain in 4 days time" he said.

"It was you who coordinated the Outcast and Berserker attacks wasn't it?" I asked.

"Guilty as charged" he replied smugly.

"Why, just to test their loyalty...to see if they can follow orders? Or is it because you wanted to see how Hiccup handles those situations...and how he controls his emotions. That's the main reason you had Dagur kidnap Astrid"

"Well, well, well...we have a genius over here. Yes, having Astrid kidnapped was for me to see how Hiccup controls his emotions...but what people fail to realize is that they can use those same emotions and reverse them...that's how I got him to go against her" he said.

"But why...you saw how heartbroken she was...you destroyed her life. Turned the person she loves against her, and now you want to add salt to the wound and force her into marriage? Berk will heed to you...but please keep her out of this" I begged.

"Sorry, but my decision is final. But you're looking at this the wrong way Ripper...if Hiccup knew in many cases that what I said wasn't true, why did he believe me? And why did he take all his anger out on Astrid when his friends were the ones who pulled the prank? Astrid's state is clearly his fault but he's too blind to see that...not that he ever will anyway. Now if you're done, I'll be heading to my quarters" he said, walking past me with his dragon in tow.

I ran past him and right to Stoick's house. I had to tell him my plan...it was a long shot but if we had any hope I would have to leave soon.

The Chief was still up by the sign of a few candle lights from the house. I didn't waste time for formalities and made my way through the door.

"Ripper, what are you doing?"

"Sir...we can't just sit here and do nothing. We can't let him marry Astrid...and the only way to stop him is to get Hiccup back" I said.

"Son...none of us like his proposal and Astrid is not in the same boat as us...she's already gone down one boat, and I don't think she'd like to see her village burn down"

"Let me go find Hiccup sir...I grew up with him during his last two years, and I know how he acts...generally. If I can get him back before the marriage in 4 days, we can stand a chance"

"I don't know Ripper, you saw how mad he was...why would he come back?" he asked.

"That's why it's a long shot sir...but we have to try" I said.

"Very well, go get my son back...but be careful" he said.

I nodded my thanks and ran to my house to get Razorcut. I would soon leave and embark on my mission to get Hiccup back...but I would take a few things first because these items would make him feel like a monster for what he's done to Astrid.

22. A Mother Never Forgets

Hiccup's POV (5 Hours since the Incident)

"Finally I'm free" I thought as Toothless and I soared into the sun-rise horizon. I can't believe it took me so long to see that they were using me...that they never accepted me, and because of my new found status, were they trying to be nice...they weren't doing it because I changed the course of Viking history for the better, they did it because they believed by treating me nicely all of a sudden, they would be forgiven for all their sins by the Gods. Well good luck bring forgiven when I'm not even there.

But what really stung was that my so called _friends_ pulled that prank on me. _I could have died. _When I looked at my sleeves, I saw cuts in them, and only then I saw the blood stains on my armour. I had been hit by some of the weapons in the forge. An axe could have chopped my head off, or I could have had a sword impale me through the chest...or every single weapon in that forge could have left its mark on me. Luckily I come off with a partly burned face that _will_ heal eventually. The only thing is my skin will feel a bit rough, but that's small price to pay for your face growing back. I can't believe they thought it would be a nice joke to pull, and blame _me_ on the destruction of the forge. When that rumour was going around the village was more than happy to start treating me like Hiccup the Useless again.

And _she_ didn't even try and warn me about it! I thought she cared for me, I thought she was my best friend...I thought she _loved_ me! But no! Instead she was just using me to have her family set for life with the gold that would have been given to her after the wedding night. And to think she actually loved me for me...but no, she loved me for being the first person to train and ride a dragon. I should have known better. I wasted my time making that ring for her...for a person who didn't even love me, and was going to dump me for my burnt face...if she even liked how I looked before. Throwing the ring at her meant I was done with her...done with my love for her, and she can choke on it for all I care.

I heard Toothless croon at me. He was worried about my behaviour. "I'm alright bud...as soon as we don't return to Berk any time soon...or any time at all for that matter" I said. I didn't know where I was going, but I knew it would be better than where I just left.

Heck, I might even find some new people.

Ripper's POV (4 Hours Later ^)

"Do you have everything ready?" Fishlegs asked me. We were walking down to the village centre where Razorcut was waiting for me. I had some armour on, a shield, a sword and a bow and arrows for any hostility I might face along the way...or if I were to run into Drago's main force and they attacked me.

"Yeah, do you have the ring?" I asked, and he handed me the small wooden box. I opened it to make sure the ring was still inside.

"Do you really think you can convince him to come back...we only have two more days until Astrid has to marry Drago" he said with a grim

expression. "Has she heard the news?"

"Yeah, when she came back in the early hours of the morning, her mother had broken the news to her. I don't know what happened after that, but I need to get one more thing before I leave" I said. We were making our way to the Hofferson home.

"What do you need to get?" he asked.

"Something that should play in convincing Hiccup to come back" I said. That's when we both heard it, and everyone walking near the Hofferson home. A loud scream and wails of crying ten seconds later. Fishlegs and I both ran in to check what happened. We ran up the stairs to see her father at the door looking on with pure shock and horror, and when we looked into her room, words could not describe the scene because we had our eyes set on one thing on the floor...

...a dagger.

Hiccup's POV (Late Afternoon)

I didn't know where I was so I had to check the map that I brought with me. The sun was setting now and had basked the sky in an ominous orange colour. It was a pretty cloudy day, as we were flying above the clouds.

"So Toothless, have any idea on where we should go?" I asked looking at the map. That's when I started to hear him growl, and this was not his friendly growl, this was a growl he made whenever a threat was nearby. "I swear to the Gods if they followed me..." I said putting the map away and holding onto the saddle, staying on high alert. Toothless stopped flapping his wings and let himself start gliding, to reduce the noise and to see if we could hear what was coming. I also had seemed to stopped breathing because I couldn't hear myself breathe.

We stayed in silence for what seemed like for hours, checking our sides and rear to see if anything was sneaking up on us, trying to listen for any odd sound that happened to occur...but nothing happened. "Well Toothless, I guess you were..." I stopped when a huge dragon burst through the layer of clouds with a loud roar. I couldn't help but stare at the massive dragon, it had to be at least twice, if not three times the size of Toothless...but that was not the shocking part.

When the dragon turned and flew at an angle above us, I saw...a person...on the back of it...and this person looked anything but friendly. "Come on Toothless, we have to get out of here!" I said and we immediately dove into the clouds, hoping to lose them. However for a massive dragon, it copied our moves and kept up with us.

"What does this person want...Whoa!" I yelled as two other dragons flew into our path forcing us above the clouds again. When I stole a brief look at those dragons, they were nothing I'd ever come across...and here they were chasing me with some crazy person on the back of the biggest dragon here. The strange thing was that they never fired any shots at me. It's not that if the dragons could or not, but they didn't. I glanced back again to see if they were there, and I only saw the two that had jumped me from below.

Where was the first one?

When I turned back in front I saw a huge dragon bursting through the clouds, and he was extremely close that I didn't have time to avoid him, and the last thing I remembered was crashing into him and falling off of Toothless...then blackness.

3 Hours Later

"Ugh...my head" I said as I slowly opened my eyes. I saw Toothless looking down at me, and nudged me in the chest, glad that I was awake. "Hey bud" I said, straightening up and patting him on the head. I took a few seconds to see where I was. It was a dark cavern, incredibly dark and I couldn't see far. That mysterious rider must have brought me.

"So you're finally awake" I heard a voice say. I tried to make out the person and where she was. I could tell it was a she by the sound of her voice. All I saw were vague outlines of rocks surrounding me, with Toothless by my side.

"Who are you? Why have you brought me here?" I asked, trying to find out where she was.

"You ride a Night Fury. That is very impressive" she remarked. She knows what dragon Toothless is, and since she rides a dragon...ok, I've got to tread carefully here. That's when she jumped down in front of me. Her clothes seemed sewn together with whatever fabric that laid about. The clothes appeared to have armour on them, at the shoulders and her back, but not normal armour, more like scales from dragons. She had an incredibly creepy mask with what appeared like bones sticking out at the top, and a huge staff that seemed to adorn a huge dragon claw at the end of it.

"I bet you know a lot about dragons" she said.

"I might know a thing or two" I said as I stood by Toothless, who had his teeth at the ready. She then twirled her staff a few times before banging it on the ground. That's when the room or cave started to light up and all those vague outlines of rocks were dragons. Some dragons had lit a fire in their mouths, keeping them burning like lanterns...I never saw any dragon that could do that.

That's when she started coming forward. "Let me show you something you don't know" she said going down on her limbs and approaching Toothless. He began to growl, but she kept coming and moved her hand in a hypnotizing way, that when it was right in front of Toothless, when she pulled it down, he fell onto his back with a smile that he would have had if I rubbed his special weak spot under his chin. I stood back, totally shocked at what just happened. How did this person do that? How did she know how to do that? Is she a friend or a foe?

"Why did you bring us here?" I asked. There would normally be no reason to kidnap someone you don't know.

"Where are you from?" she asked, while petting Toothless. At least she was friendly to the dragons.

"Berk...or I was, I ran away" I said. But when I mentioned Berk she immediately looked at me, and I didn't like that she still had her helmet on.

"Did you say you were from Berk?" she asked and I nodded in response. "It's been a while since I heard Berk" she said looking to the ground.

"Why? Were you once a part of Berk? Should I know you?" I asked. That's when she started removing her helmet. She had a small face, about my size, brownish/grayish hair and emerald green eyes. Wait. Those emerald green eyes...

"No...but I wouldn't expect you to" she said. I've seen those emerald green eyes before...I was so young that I vaguely remember them...but I do. "You were only a babe, but a mother never forgets" she said looking at me in the eyes.

No. It couldn't be her. I thought she died...she's supposed to be dead. I took a few steps back and brought my hand to my chest. I felt my heart rate had increased ten fold when she said that. But how could it be her?

"Mom" I said in a ghostly voice. I didn't realize my shock was that bad.

"Hiccup...you've grown so much" she said getting up and walking slowly over to me. I couldn't move at all. It's like someone had glued my feet to the ground and I could do nothing but watch her come closer. "I'm sure you have a ton of questions Hiccup...and rest assured, all answers will come" she said her hands outstretched for a hug. That's when all the emotions welled up inside me came out in one huge flood.

I ran into her arms and hugged her tight and she did the same. I was hugging my mom. The person I haven't seen since I was three. Here she was 17 years later. "I missed you mom" I sobbed on her shoulder.

"I've missed you too Hiccup" she said. It felt so weird yet so comforting to hear her say my name. We were probably in that position for a full five minutes before I finally pulled away. "You must be hungry from your trip" she said walking to another room, and I followed her.

"Well I have been flying for more than half a day now, so yeah" I said, as Toothless joined my side.

"Then come, I have questions for you just like you have for me, and I want to hear everything, up until today" she said.

4 Hours Later

"So that's the story mom" I said, as put down my glass. I had just spent the last four hours telling her of the earliest memories I remember. How I was made fun of and humiliated for mistakes...beat up and berated...then on how I found Toothless, and the whole Red Death incident, how Astrid found her feelings for me, how dragons and Vikings live side by side now, then the adventures we had on Berk with the dragons, my two years of training in weaponry, and learning

on becoming a Chief, then the attacks by the Outcasts and the Berserkers when I returned and the whole prank and meeting Gunarr and how he helped me to see the truth for what the people of Berk were really doing for me. I also told her about the whole incident before I left Berk.

"You had quite the life...and I missed everything" she said sadly staring at the walls of the cave. "But you think they really just accepted you after the Red Death because they felt sorry for themselves?" she asked.

"What other reason could there be mom? They only saw me as a screw-up before that, and all of a sudden they change because I did something no other Viking did in their lifetime? It just sounds stupid to me" I said, crossing my arms.

"I remember that girl Astrid. She had so much fire and spirit in her it was adorable. I remembered when you two first met. You couldn't stop talking about her to me and your dad for three straight days. You had plans in the future of proving yourself to her and marrying her...she didn't deserve that Hiccup" she said looking at me.

"You didn't hear what she said mom...when they thought I was still in bed they were in the forest...she said she only loved me for what I did...not who I was. I also heard how she was going to dump me because of this burnt face" I said, gesturing to the wound.

"Did you stay longer to hear what else they said?" she asked.

"Why would I have wanted to? Hear all the rest of the ridicule and hurtful comments that were bound to come? I don't think so" I said. She's talking as if she knew something _more _was said after I had heard enough in that conversation.

"Hiccup...it's just that if you stayed there for maybe ten seconds longer...who knows, you would have heard something that didn't cross your mind, or something that would have shed light" she spoke. Maybe, but maybe not, besides it's too late for that and I'm not going back to find out. "She might deserved some blame Hiccup, but I think you took all your anger out on her" she said.

"So what? I was angry at everyone in the village because they all thought I had gone back to the way I was before befriending Toothless. They don't trust me at all Mom. As soon as the rumour of me blowing up the forge spread, they all thought Hiccup the Useless was back" I snapped.

"Hiccup the Useless?" she asked.

"You would know if you were there mom" I replied rather harshly. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean..."

"No, no...it's fine, I mean I wasn't there for over 17 years of your life...I deserve to be shunned by you. A mother is supposed to be there for her child and I wasn't. You didn't have the mother's love you were supposed to have, and words cannot describe how sorry I am to you Hiccup...for leaving you during the time you needed me the most" she said. "How is your father?" she asked.

"Still the thick headed Viking he was when you left...I'm guessing" I

said with a smile, to which she laughed. "He's also accepted this dragon lifestyle and has a dragon of his own...a Thunderdrum" to which her eyes widened in surprise.

"Well that's fitting, I mean they both have big mouths that sometimes don't know when to shut-up or know how to tear something down" she said, both of us laughing.

"How did you find me mom?" I asked all of a sudden.

"What do you mean...like outside right now...or?"

"Like when I was born...how did you feel?" I asked.

"Ah...that was the happiest day of my life. Carrying you was something different, I mean your father and the entire village had to handle my mood-swings...not to mention Ingrid Hofferson, who was carrying Astrid...her's were the worst. Once I saw poor Aaron being thrown through the door. He suffered a bruised shoulder in that and you could hear Ingrid yelling something from inside. Aaron said that was perfectly normal, her way of getting some her anger out" I looked at her in surprise. _"Boy, if me and Astrid had a child...wait what am I thinking?"_

"Anyway, when you were born, you were unusually smaller than most babies born during the time...that Gothi had small hopes for you surviving your first winter. Your dad even had his doubts...no surprise there. But I didn't. I kept you in my sight during your first year, making sure you grew up correctly, or so far by my abilities of being a mother" she said.

"Why did you leave?" I asked. "If you were there, who knows, things would have turned out way differently" I said.

She turned away...her eyes hiding sadness and anger. "You should ask your father that question...he'll tell you everything" she said rather harshly. I didn't want to press any further since by the sound of her voice, that was a fragile topic and I didn't want to start off on the wrong foot with my mother after 17 years.

"But Hiccup, go back to when you threw your ring...how was her composure?" she asked.

"She was on the ground crying...and when she opened the box and saw the ring she just lost it" I said without much regret at my action.

"Hiccup...I think you took _all _your anger at everyone and directed it at _her _in those moments...something I don't think she deserved.

"Mom...she _ignored _me when we were small...she even humiliated me and made fun of me...and berated me for not being a Viking when I was small, and here that girl was pretending to love me! She deserved every bit of it" I said. "But enough of that...tell me how you came here and how you have all these dragons" I said, gesturing to all the dragons that surrounded us.

"Well...I freed these dragons who were trapped and given to a tyrant called Drago Bloodfist...who's on a path for conquest" she said.

"He's burned down villages, slaughtered men, women and children...those villages that stood against him...some chose to join him to avoid the same fate, but they are now under his rule and if they show any signs of straying from _his _path...he'll not hesitate to burn the village down and leave no survivors, and he does all of this with his man and dragon army" she said. So the stories of him were true. I would hate to meet the guy.

"Anyway, it's time for you to rest. All the rest of answers will come tomorrow" she said getting up, walking over to me and giving me a hug to which I returned.

"It's finally nice to see you again Hiccup" she said.

"Same here mom...to you I mean" I said with a laugh, and we retired for the night.

Drago's POV (Night on Berk)

"What news of her?" I asked. I was in one of the guest houses that Stoick had nicely provided for me to live until my marriage day. Orvon had just entered to update me on the news of an incident at the Hofferson home.

"She's holding alright sir...damaged emotionally for Thor knows how long...but still with us" he said. I nodded my head in confirmation, but we soon heard some flapping outside, and saw a blur fly past the open door. Orvon ran outside to see what it was.

"What was it Orvon?" I asked as he came back inside.

"It appears one of the Berk riders is leaving sir on a Whispering Death" he replied.

"He must be going to find Hiccup and try to bring him back...send five men to bring him back" I said.

"Dead or alive?"

"Alive, so we can perform a public execution" I replied.

"Do you think he'll find him?" he asked.

"No...and if he does I doubt Hiccup will come back...by the way, have we lost any more dragons?" I asked.

"A few more sir. A scout had just arrived here today in the morning, saying seven dragons were set free". That dragon guardian is getting on my nerves. That's probably the twentieth time he or she has interfered with my plans.

"Double the guard shifts, I don't want to lose any more dragons" I said as I looked into the fire. When I find that dragon protector, he/she is going to wish they chose another profession.

23. What Have I Done

Hiccup's POV (Late Evening - Next Day)

I had been spending the entire day with my mom, catching up on old memories of each of us and chatting about her whole mission of rescuing dragons. She still hadn't told me about why she had left, and when I asked her again, she politely said to ask my dad. But I told her I would never be going back to Berk because they all think I've returned to my old self, and that's what they hate, so I'm doing what they want, giving them room of me.

"Hiccup, you shouldn't jump to conclusions like that. Maybe you read the situation all wrong" my mother said when I gave her that answer. I replied by repeating exactly what I heard in each conversation I overheard. She said I had a good reason to leave, but I should have stayed longer. I started to think about that whole saying "Mother knows best" because I couldn't imagine doing what she just told me, in staying longer to hear the more hurtful comments they were going to make of me.

But other than talking, she showed me the rest of the cavern she was living in. One tunnel in particular led to a huge indoor "paradise" you could say...for dragons. There were Monstrous Nightmares, Deadly Nadders, Hideous Zipplebacks, Terrible Terrors, Changewings, a Scauldron and many, many more different dragons that I've never seen. She said they all had traits that made them unique...and they were all traits that Drago was using in building his dragon army. I probably spent half the day in that cavern studying and bonding with these new dragons. They were skeptical at first at seeing another human, but my mother was with me when I bonded with them, and by her presence with me, they knew she trusted me, so they did as well.

I was now walking in the main tunnel that led to this place with Toothless. "So what so you think bud? Nice place to stay huh?" I asked. I crooned something, and I saw tell-tale traces of a smile on him. I also noticed he was trying to make friends with my mom's dragon. He was about twice to three times the size of Toothless, and didn't seem to keen on making friends with him just yet.

"I mean, I just found my mom, who seems great...now I see where I got all my skills from" I told him. "One thing is for sure, I am never going..." I stopped my sentence as I heard something. Toothless also became on high alert as he bared his teeth and we turned around to face the only way that something could enter this cavern. I had my sword with me, which I had forged out of Gronckle Iron and my shield. I got them at the ready and waited. Dragons rarely used the main entrance, they had their own, so to hear flapping and a few growls coming from the main entrance...I could only suspect one thing...

"Finally I found you" I heard a voice all too familiar. I sighed in annoyance as I sheathed my sword and lowered my shield. Toothless also got out of his attack stance. In a few seconds Ripper, along with Razorcut, had landed in front of us, and wow did he look mad.

"Where the Hel have you been!?" he yelled at me.

"Nice to see you don't have any troubles on your shoulders" he said in a more calmed tone.

"Leaving Berk was the best decision I ever made...I don't know why I didn't do it earlier" I said with a smile. I could hear his footsteps

quicken to catch up with me, with Razorcut also keeping pace.

"Really? Then why didn't you run away five years ago?"

"I was young and stupid then"

"You still are...for leaving Berk when it really needed you" he replied.

"If I didn't leave Berk...I wouldn't have found my mother!" I yell back at him. He took a step back.

"Your mother?" he asked, clearly not believing me.

"Hiccup? Is everything al...who's this?" we both heard a voice and when we turned around, I saw my mom walking up to us.

"Ripper, this is my mom...Mom, this is Ripper, he's an, acquaintance" I said. Ripper stood still with his mouth wide open.

"Uh...you'll have to excuse me Hiccup's mom, but it's just...everyone on Berk thought you were dead, no offense" he said.

" (chuckle) Non taken...but no I'm very much alive thank you...would you like to join us..."

"Mom, Ripper and I were in the middle of a serious discussion, with the issues back on Berk" I said, interrupting her.

"Oh, of course, just call me when you need to dear" she said and left. When she was out of sight I turned my attention back to Ripper.

"You see, if I didn't leave Berk, I would never have found her...I would never have found my true family" I said.

"You have a family back on Berk as well" he pressured.

"Really? Did they tell you what they said when they were in the forest? Did my father tell you what he began to think of me when rumours started to spread that I'd gone back to my old _Useless_ self? Did Astrid tell you what she said to the others about me!?" I yell at him.

"Were you there to see Stoick's anger at the teens when he found out they did it? Did it not hurt you to see Astrid break down and cry for you?! Did you not know who Gunarr really was?" he shot back.

"I knew Gunarr was...he was the only person who understood me. He was the only person who had gone through the same torture I did when he was my age. He was the one who helped me see who the people of Berk really are" I yelled back. The atmosphere was passed tense. Our dragons even took up our sides, both ready to fight if we did.

"Well he lied about one thing Hiccup...his name" Ripper said. "He's not Dagur's advisor...he's his superior" he replied.

"Please, the only way he could be superior is if he was chief" I said.

"He is Chief Hiccup...of about 15 villages, 30 if he didn't burn the others" he said. That's when my heart stopped. My mom told me of someone called Drago Bloodfist who had been building an army of dragons, and had burned any village down that refused to work with him...that meant... "Gunarr, is Drago Bloodfist Hiccup...he had been behind the attacks of the Outcasts and when Dagur kidnapped Astrid...he was behind the two of them...he controls them Hiccup" he said.

"Well, at least we know there is a person out there who can control the two of them" I said turning around and walking away, with Ripper following.

"Those were tests Hiccup, and now Alvin and Dagur are commanders in his ranks. They're working with him in conquering the Archipelagos...even more lands after he's done with us" he continued.

"And what does any of that have to do with me?"

"He needed you out of the way Hiccup...don't you see that? He knew you were the only one capable of standing up against him, the only one smart enough to fight him, and the only other person with a Night Fury" he said.

"So go find his dad to beat him, if he's such the peaceful one" I said.

"He killed his father Hiccup...when he ran away, he came back nearly 20 years later to reclaim his right as Chief...and he did beat his father using his dragon...but he didn't stop there...he kept attacking and attacking and attacking...he made his father suffer" he told me.

"Ripper, when are you going to get it through your head that I'm not coming back to a village that abused me, a village that wanted me gone, a village where I tried to fit in, but berated me for every mistake I made...why would I go back?" I asked, turning around and facing him.

"They acknowledged their treatment of you Hiccup...they're trying to put that past behind them" he tried to convince me but it wasn't working.

"Really? So how come when one rumour went around that the forge blew up because of me...how come they thought it was my fault? Just because I was in it? Just because they thought I went back to Hiccup the Useless?" I asked, curling my hands into fists.

"Don't become the villagers Hiccup, what about Astrid she..."

"Don't say her name" I said, through gritted teeth. "You should have heard what she said Ripper, how she pretended to love me...just because her family were to be set for life she married me. She didn't love me out love, she only did this for money!" I yelled. That's when something unexpected happened. Ripper grabbed me by the shoulders, and before I knew it, I felt a knee to my stomach, causing me to bend over and he brought his elbow down onto my back causing me to fall face down on the ground.

"If you stayed longer in that conversation you would have known she was only being sarcastic...she wanted to be by your side when you woke up, when you first met her in the centre she was going to tell you what happened, and even before the prank, she was searching for you! She wanted to tell you Hiccup! And you berated her...broke her in front of the entire village!" he yelled at me. "Fishlegs told me everything...she was going to tell you Hiccup, but you let your blind rage, rage that was put into you by Drago control you...and you couldn't see the truth" he finished.

I coughed a few times before looking back at him, still on the ground. "What about the times she ignored me, when she berated me for being me! She deserved every thing I did to her" I said rather cruelly. That's when Ripper tackled me to the ground and was on top of me, and punched me on the right side of the face. " (chuckle) At least you have the decency to punch me on the not-burnt part of my face" I said, before I kicked him off and tackled him.

"You selfish bastard!" he yelled as he rolled so he was back on top. "Do you know the pain you caused her...and throwing this at her" he yelled, pulling out the ring I made for her, and left it aside while we fought on the ground. "She didn't deserve that Hiccup" he yelled as we fought. I punched him in the face, making him stagger back. I got up and we both stood facing each other, a bit bruised and out of breath.

"You don't know the pain you caused her" he said.

"Like I care for her anymore...I left Berk and her behind" I replied.

"You do know Drago is planning to have Berk under his control...and you know how he's doing it...through marriage...and guess who's the bride" he said, wiping a bit of blood from his nose.

"Well then, when you get back convey my regards to the happy couple" I snapped.

"Do you know the state she's in...what she tried to do?! The state you put her in!" he screamed. I just looked away. "The people of Berk won't fight because if we do, he will burn the village to the ground...don't you see Hiccup, he told you those things so you'd get mad at us...you'd blame us for everything...he needed you of the way. But Hiccup, if you knew those things all along, how come you only took action when he told you?" he asked.

I turned my gaze away from him, looking the other way. I never realized that. "Guess coming here was a waste of time" he said pulling out something. I looked back at him and saw him pulling out a dagger, and a journal and dropping it near the wooden ring box, and walking back to Razorcut.

"What's that?" I force myself to ask.

"Those, the book is Astrid's journal...and the dagger is what she tried to use to kill herself" he said walking by him.

She tried to kill herself? "She's alright...not that you care anymore. Luckily her mother walked into her room to give her

breakfast, and saw she was holding the dagger with both hands and it was just a half a foot from her chest...her heart. Her mother rushed in and tried to yank it from her grasp. She held onto it with all her might, begging her mother to let her do it...saying there was nothing left for her. But her mother managed to get it to drop and she kicked it away. Astrid tried to dive for it but her mother held her back, holding onto her tightly while she wailed in her arms. Ingrid brought tucked her head into her and she let it all out. Me and Fishlegs ran in to see, as well as her father. We watched her cry into her mother's chest, with her hugging her daughter tightly. She couldn't offer any words of comfort because she knew she couldn't. I took her journal and the dagger, hoping to show it to you as a last resort, hoping you'd come...guess it was all for nothing" he said.

"Did she say why she wanted to kill herself?" I asked softly, picking up the dagger and journal.

"It's all in her journal Hiccup, grabbing a bed roll off of Razorcut. "You're staying?" I asked.

"I spent an entire day searching for you...I deserve a break" he snapped at me, laying it down on the ground and grabbing food from his bag. I turned my attention back to the journal. It was similar to mine, brown leather cover, a bit smaller. I felt along the edges, not believing that this was her journal.

"You know Hiccup" Ripper called from behind me. I turned to him. "You have the right to be angry Hiccup...at the people of Berk who treated you poorly, heck even your father...but you did not have the right to channel all that anger at Astrid. She cares for you, and what you did to her was beyond hate Hiccup...and if you didn't know, the reason she broke down crying, is because you're the only person to have an emotional effect on her so when you broke your love for her...it damaged her, more than you actually think" he said before turning back to his food.

I turned back to the journal and removed the string that closed it, and opened it to the last page. The last page had dry marks, as if water had been poured on it, but they were dry spots. She had been crying when writing this last entry. I began reading it:

Hiccup was right...I was never there for him when he needed it. When he was made fun of by Snotlout and the Twins, I should have stood up for him. But all I cared about was my reputation...not the feelings of a boy that needed help. I was worried about how the village would treat me if...they knew I was being friends with him...I was stupid...so, incredibly stupid. _

Hiccup had the right to berate me in front of everyone...he was in that situation so many times. But I just wished he could let me explain...how I didn't mean any of the mean things I said in the forest. I just said...them to express my anger at the others...I should have known better. If he stayed ten seconds, he would have seen me beat up Snotlout, and yell at them for going ahead with the prank. But now I'll never get the chance...I ran to the place we were before he left for that trip...and I cried my eyes out...if I just got to him in time..._

When I returned, Mama told me about a marriage contract, and who it was...Drago Bloodfist. I heard many stories about him, and one of

them was how he got Hiccup to leave...but despite his intentions, what he told Hiccup was true...Hiccup doesn't deserve to be living with us...with me. But I couldn't stop myself from burying my head in my pillow and cry. I yelled at mama to leave me alone. They all felt sorry for me...having my heart broken by the man I love in front of the village and being forced to marry a man who caused it. The marriage is 4 days away..._

This is my last entry...I cannot live without Hiccup, when I saw the ring...for a brief second I pictured us under the alter, exchanging the vows, and our wedding night...but then I realized when he threw the ring at me...all that was gone in a flash...I would never be with him.

There is a dagger beside me...it was the last thing forged by Hiccup, at least when I die, I'll have something of his close to my heart. I can never marry that monster Drago for what he's done...to Hiccup. I could never bear the thought or life of living with another man, bearing his children, and living with a shattered heart. The only man who would ever kiss me, love me, touch me, the only man I would be honoured to bear children with...is somewhere out there. This might be a coward's way to go...it goes against everything I was taught by Mama and Papa, but I just can't live without him.

Astrid Hofferson

I couldn't believe what I just read. My hands had gone numb, and I couldn't feel the book on my skin anymore, that I let it fall to the ground. I looked to the wooden box on the ground, not far from where I dropped the book, and held it up. I opened it to reveal that gold ring with a diamond, gem and ruby in the middle, and our initials carved into it.

"When's the wedding?" I asked, still looking at the ring.

"Tomorrow...her mother must be trying to have her look at the brighter side" he said, digging into his fish.

Her wedding is tomorrow...she begins her life as a wife to Drago Bloodfist, the tyrannical ruler bent on conquering any land he finds. Berk is the only island that is capable of fighting back against him and his army...he needed me out of the way.

"But if she does marry him, then Berk will not be under attack" I said, seeing as no one would die.

"Huh, the old Hiccup would let some maniac come into Berk, marry his girl and let him continue on his merry way" he said.

"That was before my friends took half of my face" I replied.

"You know before I left, Drago told me it was easy to manipulate you because he knew what it felt like to be you...how similar you two are. In fact before I left I overheard him talking about if he does find you, he might consider asking you to join him in his conquering. You two are similar Hiccup...except the only difference is that he let his anger and hatred control him. He's put you in that position...now it's your choice, do you really want to be a man like Drago, or be your own man and do the right thing" he told me.

What Drago said to me was true...how the villagers were just trying to repent themselves and accept me. What he said was true about how they were worried that Hiccup the Useless might return. I was a fool. He told me what I knew in the sick bay...and yet I let him in my head...I let him manipulate my anger even when I forgave the village for their old treatment of me...I was a goddamn fool.

And Astrid...Oh Gods...what have I done? I took it all out on her...when she didn't deserve any of it...I pushed the person who loved me the most, after what we've been through...I just threw it all away by throwing the...I looked at the ring in my hand and dropped to my knees, feeling as if I carried the weight of the world on my shoulders. I did...I carried the guilt of it along with mine.

"What have I done?" I asked this time aloud.

"You screwed up big time. So what are you going to do about it?" Ripper asked. The gears in my head started spinning. If what my mom said was true, then this man had his army waiting at Berk already. If I went in and attacked, that'd be the end of me. There has to be another way.

"Is Drago a man of his word?" I asked all of a sudden.

"I believe so...even though he is a ruthless murderer, he was in the army, and he grew up under a code of honour, so he probably does. Why?" he asked.

It was a risky shot and I wouldn't have much time to prepare, that I would have to leave in probably an hour or so. "I know what to do" I said as I ran to the cave I was staying in and grabbed a large piece of leather I brought with Toothless. I brought it in case Toothless needed me to fix a new tail for him, but I had another invention mind...something that would give me flight, but I only had an hour to make it and tell my plan to Ripper. The only problem with my plan was that...

...I might not come out alive.

24. The Hero Returns

Astrid's POV (Wedding Day)

Knock, Knock, Knock

I pulled my pillow from underneath me and covered my head. I didn't want to get up.

"Astrid?" my mom called. I heard the creak the door made when it opened and heard sounds of distinct footsteps, which were sort of muffled by the pillow. "Astrid, dear, I know you're awake" she said sitting on the bedside. I didn't want to get out of bed because if I did, everything forward from that point will be pointless to me.

"Astrid please, the women are waiting" my mom begged laying a hand on my shoulder. I could sense the distress and sadness in her voice. She

didn't want to do this but she had to...for the good of the village, and I had to marry _him _for the good of the village.

"Let them wait...I'm not getting up" I sobbed into the bed covers.

"Astrid" my mom said pulling the pillow from my face and she could see my blood-shot eyes, from the all the crying I've done since he left four days ago. She pulled me up and straightened some of my hair that was messy, "I cannot say I understand what you're going through...because I have no clue about it...but all I can tell you is that me, your dad and Riptide will be here for you...so will your friends and the other villagers. We'll _all be here for you_" she said, cupping her hands under my chin and wiping a single tear away from under my right eye with her thumb.

"Come on...where's that Astrid Hofferson I raised, the one that never gave up, the one that fought for what she believed in, the one who always punched anyone senseless if they got on her bad side?" she asked with a smile. I felt my mouth curve upwards. She always knew how to cheer me up...even in a desperate time such as this. "Come on dear, like I said the women are waiting" she said getting up and giving her hand for me to take.

I looked at it and then back at her. She wouldn't be leaving this room without me, so I reluctantly extended my hand towards hers and she took it, and slowly pulled me up. "Your dress is already in the bathhouse" she said. On any other day...if it were Hiccup...part of me would be dreading the ceremony because of how girly I would look, but the other half would be thinking what effect I would have on Hiccup...I quickly pushed the thought out of my head. I couldn't be thinking of him right now...not when the fate of this village lies on my shoulders in this marriage with _him. _

My mom and I walked quickly to the bathhouse that was close by. It was dawn here on Berk; the sun's rays just peeking over the horizon. My mom opened the door and in the middle of the building was a tub with steam coming out of it and many other buckets of hot water near it, with about six women gathered around the wash tub.

I slowly removed my clothes and quickly hopped into the hot water, and rested my head against the top of the tub, leaving it and my shoulders the only body parts above the waterline.

"So how does this work?" I ask.

"Well, we all prepare you for the wedding by washing you, and making you look presentable for the man...we also give you information on what to expect for the consummation" Helga said. She was the wife of the baker here on Berk, and a friend of my mother's. I cringed when she said that word...consummation.

"We don't know how he will handle in bed dear" Phelgma said. She was one of the cooks at the Mead Hall. "All we know is that he is a war veteran and a murdered...we don't know what you will face" she said, as she poured hot water over me.

"But we have heard that he is a man of his word...so he should have some respect for you" another woman said, I think one of the healers.

I didn't want to think about tonight. How I would have to let him _touch_ me, let him decide how to take things. He's _twice_ my age for crying out loud! He may have some experience but after what he's done...I'm not expecting anything soft, slow or caring. I bet he'll just be filled with lust by the night that he'll practically rape me.

"But nonetheless, you have to let him do what he desires. I know it sounds wrong to hear dear, but men don't like it when the girl is in control" my mom said as she rubbed my shoulders. "You'll be the Chief of the House..."

"With him, I highly doubt it" I interrupted her.

"...but he'll want to be the one in control in bed and outside" my mom finished. I think she knew what I said was right and didn't want to try and make me look at the brighter side. There was _no_ _bright_ side here. The wash ended ten minutes later and they quickly dried me off, and wrapped me in a towel and led me to another room where I saw the dress.

It was a traditional bride's dress. Long white dress till the ankles that hugged tightly at the waist, chest, and a small white veil that was supposed to hang behind my head, long sleeves that hugged my arms...basically I would be choked alive in that dress.

As soon as I was dressed, they sat me down in front of a mirror and began working on my hair and make-up. Gods, I hated this. I was getting all ready for a man who ruined my life. I pitied myself as I looked directly at my reflection, telling myself if I had just kept my mouth shut when he was listening in on the conversation in the forest.

"Is dad worried about this as much as you are?" I suddenly ask my mother.

"Believe me Astrid, he is...he's talking with Drago at the moment"

Berk Docks (Aaron's POV)

"Why did you call me out here Aaron?" Drago asked as he stepped beside me and looked out to see the sun rising.

"I want you to know that I will never forgive you for what you've done to my daughter" I said, hate evident in every word I said.

"If I recall, she's marrying a man with incredible power, wealth and who can control anyone he wants" he said turning to me with a smug smile.

"She's marrying a man who turned the man she loved against her, made him break her heart and humiliate her...you nearly drove her to commit suicide!" I said, inches from his face. He didn't budge. All he had was a straight face, looking me dead in the eye and no emotion on his face.

"If I remember correctly, it was Hiccup who broke her heart, Hiccup who humiliated her in front of the village, and Hiccup who drove her

to commit suicide...so I don't know why you're pointing the finger at me" he said in a "holier than thou" tone.

"After you manipulated him against us...she didn't deserve that...and you have the audacity to come in and push her into marriage with you!" my voice was raising. I had to keep my composure, but I couldn't help it. The man standing in front of me was the cause of heartbreak for my daughter, but he was also the man to touch my daughter, and he would make me pay by treating her poorly.

"I don't why you keep blaming me. Hiccup knew how you all felt about him before I manipulated him, yet he let my words go to his head. He's not strong lad you thought he was Aaron...and to lose control of your anger like that...no way to treat your daughter" he said with a smile turning back to face the sun.

"Believe me, I'll have a talk with the lad when I find him...but every problem has a root, and I'm looking right at him" I said.

"There is no point even me being here Aaron. I know everyone is against me but with my army on the horizon and the power I have, you all can't do anything...that is, if you want to keep your lives. Rest assured I will treat your daughter well, unlike Hiccup" he said with a laugh.

"Now if you'll excuse me, I have to wait for my bride at the alter" he said and turned around, and I could hear him laughing all the way up the hill, while I stood looking over the horizon, seeing his army out there. I really hope the Gods have a plan in store for us...where my daughter will not have to go through with this...but with each passing second, that hope fades away.

Centre of the Village (Normal POV)

The sun was up and basking the land in its warmth...well, some warmth other than the chilly morning...however it did not reflect the mood of the village. Most of them were about to witness a very sad moment...where Astrid Hofferson would sign her life away to a monster. The seating involved most people from the village, some were from Drago's command; mostly his lieutenants and soldiers, who were also standing guard around the Berkians in case they had any idea.

Drago was at the alter, with Orvon as his best man, and holding the sword that he would use to give Astrid her ring. "How are the men doing?" Drago asked, as they waited for the bride.

"The men are alright sir...a bit disappointed that they couldn't take the island by force, but they live by your decisions" his second in command told him.

It was then when the chatting among the guests silenced and at the last row, was Astrid, with Ruffnut behind her holding her sword that she would use to give his ring. She started the slow walk to the alter, glancing to the guests who were there. Most of them had a look of sympathy for the girl, knowing that she didn't deserve this fate with that man...but there was nothing they could do. Her family sat at the front.

Aaron saw the look on his wife and knew she didn't like seeing her daughter like this. It was almost as if seeing her walk to her death, which in a way it was. Ingrid might have told Astrid to go through with this. If the whole village was not at stake here, she might have begged her daughter to run away and never look back.

Stoick was waiting at the front. He would be presiding over the ceremony, and he watched this beautiful, young, talented girl perform a walk that should be with joy, so sadly. It felt like an eternity for Astrid to reach the alter and turn and face her future husband. He was dressed in the traditional garment for men in these ceremonies; he was wearing, what appeared to be a fine silk tunic with a bear skin robe hanging off his shoulders, and wearing his helmet as well. Once the bride and groom were facing each other the ceremony started.

"As you all know, we are here to join two people under the watchful eye of the Gods...to build new alliances and live a peaceful life" Stoick started. He didn't even want to say those lines, but he had to...as Chief.

"Drago Bloodfist and Astrid Hofferson, will be bound as husband and wife, and will live their lives together till the day they die...let's begin with the rings" he said. Orvon and Ruffnut both moved up with the swords that belonged to the bride and groom's families, which held the ring at the tip. They handed them to their rightful owners and Astrid and Drago held it up; Drago with pride and Astrid with sadness and reluctance.

"Now, let's..." Stoick stopped as he heard a very _distinct _sound emanate in the air, and so did everyone else. "What was that?" Orvon asked.

"That sounds like..." Drago's eyes widened. No, it couldn't be him. His fears were confirmed when a jet black dragon flew into sight and landed behind the guests with a rider on top of him. There were gasps from the crowd...but relieved ones, and Astrid felt a tug in her heart that she thought she would never feel for the rest of her life. A figure dressed in black leather armour got off the dragon, which had a red tail fin, and removed his helmet, but everyone knew who came.

The guards immediately unsheathed their swords and axes and had their spears at the ready and surrounded him, Alvin and Dagur among them. "Stop!" a voice yelled, and they turned to see Drago holding his hand up, and his straight lip curve into a smile.

"Hiccup...didn't think I'd see you so soon...and here of all places" he said stepping down from the alter.

_Hiccup's POV _

"I didn't think I'd be back so soon either" I replied, glancing around to see everyone staring at me, but avoiding Astrid's eyes, and ended by looking at Drago.

"And may I ask why you're interrupting my wedding?" he asked, gesturing to Astrid behind him. I looked down, trying to recall what my mom said to during out many discussions.

"A person once told me...that dying on your feet, is a better way to go than living on your knees...so I guess you can decipher what I mean from that" I said.

"Indeed I can...but why fight for a village that berated you Hiccup? You all..." he said raising his arm and gesturing to the villagers of Berk "...clearly failed to see the potential and loyalty that this young man has. Comes back to save the village that didn't love him. You know Hiccup, that's something I look for in a man...a commander if you will" he said with a smile as he walked towards me. "I told myself that if I ever came upon you in my travels, I would offer you a position in my army...treat you how should have been for those 15 years of your life" he said.

"WHAT!?" I heard two voices yell. Both of us, as well as everyone else looked to see Alvin and Dagur rush up to us. "Ar' ye mad Drago? He is my arch nemesis!" Alvin said, holding the handle of his sword.

"No Drago...he is _my _enemy! He stole that Skrill from me and he has to pay with that dragon's head!" Dagur yelled pointing to Toothless who growled at him.

"Enough!" Drago yelled to the both of them. "Let him make his choice" he said.

"But..."

"Did you not hear me? Let. Him. Make. His. Choice" Drago said in a much more dark tone, to which the two of them immediately obeyed. Ripper was right, he was going to ask if I wanted to join his army...fight and kill innocent people, capture dragons, use them against anyone who stands in my way, and bend their will to my own.

"I already made my choice Drago...it wasn't to become a man like you...so no" I said strongly, looking him in the eye. He let out a long sigh, lowering his head in disappointment.

"Well then, if you're here to fight us...you can see you're vastly outnumbered, and surrounded by two men who really want to kill you" he said, and I turned to see Alvin and Dagur with their weapons drawn and standing behind me on either side. "Why refuse me Hiccup? I could give you a life you never had...treat you like family if I have to, and believe me, you deserve it" he tried to persuade me.

"You're right I do deserve it...for the past five years that's what Berk felt like...a family. And when I let you into my head, I lost sight of my home...it was all my fault...I should have been stronger...but I was weak. Sure my friends pull pranks on me, sure sometimes the village does get annoyed by irresponsibility...but in the end I never thought of it, because...there are people here who accepted me..."

I looked at Gobber, "...there are people here who acknowledge me for the man I will become..." I said looking at my father and the Hofferson family, "...there are people here who will stand by me when the time comes..." I looked at my friends, "...and there are people here who love me for me" I said looking at Astrid, who looked back at me in the eye. "It took me four days to realize I had my home

here...but I let you blind me, I let you manipulate me...but that's not going to happen again" I said, standing straight with a determined look at him.

_Clap. Clap. Clap _

"Truly a remarkable speech Hiccup" he said, lowering his hands while he walked and we were just a foot apart. That's only when I realized he's a foot taller than me and even though he was thin, I could see by how tightly his clothes wrapped around him that he was built like a yak. "You truly would have made a wonderful commander" he said before turning away and walking back to the alter.

"I know you didn't come alone" he said all of a sudden. "I know a friend of yours fled Berk, clearly in search of you, and he succeeded, but I do know you're smarter than you let on...so you wouldn't have come alone. My men are scattered in the forests Hiccup, they'll find him soon enough" he said. He really did think three steps ahead of his opponents. Luckily I thought four steps ahead.

"As you know I'm not here to accept your offer to join your ranks..." I said.

"Then why are you here? Why did you interrupt my wedding?" he asked, his tone a bit angered, but still on the calm side.

I took a deep breath, while I unsheathed my sword and pointed it at him, "I Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third...challenge you Drago Bloodfist...for the hand of Astrid Hofferson" I said aloud, enough for everyone present to hear. I could hear gasps from the villagers and laughs from the men of Drago's army, including Alvin and Dagur.

I could also see Drago laughing himself as he shook his head, and started walking towards me again. "A challenge, and on my wedding day...well then, I surely can't reject the offer with my future wife watching can I?" he asked and glanced at Astrid, as if asking for her approval, and she just scowled at him.

"Very well then Hiccup, I accept your challenge. But I know this is a duel, so what are the terms?" he asked.

"If I win...you leave Berk alone and never, _ever _come back" I said. He was a man of his word (hoping), so he should abide by the terms if he loses.

"And if I win..." he said walking slowly towards me "...I not only marry your girlfriend, but I will also run my blade...right. Through. Your. Heart" he said, lowering his face so he was eye level with me "...and watch the life drain out of your eyes...right before I slice your head, and place it on top of our fireplace" he said. This was why everyone who fought him or bowed down to him...he was beyond fearful. He's the kind of man you would run from all your life, the one you hope that you'd never meet in your lifetime, or the afterlife.

"Hiccup don't!" Astrid yelled and tried to come to me but was pulled back by his second in command, holding both her hands and placing them around her back.

"Do we have an accord?" he asked, reaching out his hand...and I could see the murder in his eyes. I looked to everyone else, they all had that same look in their eyes..._fear. _They were scared for me...Astrid was could only look on and I saw the plead on her face not to agree with it...it was not worth my life. But I had to repay her.

Drago knew he was going to win...the villagers and his men knew he was going to win...Astrid knew it...and so did I.

"We do" I said grasping his hand and shook it sealing my fate.

The only question I had in mind was how long can I last.

****A/N:****** Well, things are really getting tense here guys. I really love your reviews and that this story is catching your eye. Our Hiccup will face his greatest challenge here by dueling Drago...who is a 20 year war veteran. The odds seem stacked against him huh? Where is Ripper in all this? Will Hiccup _survive _his fight? All in due time next chapter. ******

****Leave a review of your thoughts here. I would love to hear them.

****Take care. NFS Lover signing out!****

25. A Fool's Fight

****A/N:** Hey guys, been a while eh? I was super busy at school this and last week. Had a ton of assignments due, tests and not to mention exams are next week for me. So I got to make the most of it. But I managed to squeeze this chapter out, and I hope you guys enjoy it.

_Hiccup's POV _

"So would you prefer we fight here? I'll have my men usher the villagers into a circle and have them watch the spectacle...or do you prefer we fight in your Dragon Academy?" he asked. I looked around, seeing everyone's eyes on me. If we fought here that would mean less obstacles for Ripper and the dragons to get through, and there's no chained roof.

"We'll fight here Drago" I replied and he smiled.

"Wonderful...let me prepare myself, you might want to do the same thing" he said as he turned around and met up with his men. It looked like he was getting ready with his armour and weapon; I should do the same.

"Hiccup?" I heard someone ask and I turned around to see the Twins, Snotlout and Fishlegs standing behind me.

"I have nothing to say to any of you" I said coldly and turned to walk to Toothless who was on edge with many of the guards holding their weapons and looking at him.

"Then don't say anything Hiccup, but just hear us out" Fishlegs

spoke. I guess they would pester me until I let them speak their minds, and since I was probably going to die in less than half an hour, I might as well hear what they have to say.

"Hiccup...I'm sorry..._we're _sorry for what we did...even though I had no part in it" he said quickly. I was not looking at them, so they didn't see a smirk form across my face.

"I know you're sorry Fishlegs...what about you three?" I asked the Twins and Snotlout. "Are you sorry for doing this to me?" I asked pointing to the burned skin on the left side of my face. They didn't look me in the eye, their attention was towards the ground, trying to avoid my gaze. "I see that you all think I'm ugly now...well congratulations Snotlout...you're the better looking one now. Is that what you wanted?" I ask again. Still no reply.

"I don't even know why I'm wasting my breath with you three...since you did this to me" I spoke pointing to my wound and turning to inspect my sword. It by far the best sword I had forged, using what was left of the Gronckle Iron. It wasn't wide and big as the other swords, but a thin blade that was meant to cut, slash and make an absolute clean cut. It was one my best works and I called it Stinger.

"Cuz, I'm sorry ok" I heard Snotlout say behind me. That was something I never expected him to say to me.

"Excuse me?" I asked turning around.

"I'm sorry...it was only meant to be a small prank...just to scare you, but I didn't think it through...and I'm sorry for what I did" he said. His face didn't look apologetic but I knew it wasn't everyday that Snotlout Jorgenson apologized to you...and it was nearly a first for him.

"Hiccup, are you ready?" Drago asked walking to the middle of the crowd, who had now dispersed back to give us enough fighting room. All the seats had been removed, the people standing probably forty feet away from Drago, all around.

"Yes" I replied and walked to the centre of that fighting ring. When I crossed a certain point, a few of his soldiers blocked off the path I came through, effectively cutting off any means of escape. I didn't plan to run away, but now if it did get tough, there was no way out.

Drago had a smug smile on his face. He had removed his cloak, and was wearing leather armour, black at that, arm braces, what looked like armed boots, most likely from the military and I saw him leaning on his sword, the tip of the blade on the ground and he was holding the handle. I looked see what was behind him, and saw the alter, with Astrid being held by his second command, in case she had any ideas of interrupting the match. She had a look of terror and fear for me. I could tell she was asking me why I chose to do this, but answers will come after this fight...I hope.

"Wouldn't want your friends interrupting, so..." he clapped his hands and soon I heard grunts and yells from the teens as they were pushed to where Astrid was, with guards behind them. My father was next to Astrid's family, all of them staring in fear and worry.

"Are you sure you want to do this Hiccup? The offer is still open" he said, gesturing his arms out in a friendly manner.

"This is how it's going to go down Drago...I'm not backing out now" I said as I unsheathed Stinger.

"Very well, but your dragon better not interfere" he said, pointing at Toothless at the back with his sword. "Because it would be a waste to kill such a beautiful weapon" he finished. I couldn't believe the nerve of this man...he clearly had no regard for any life, dragons, animals...I'm guessing not even people.

"You've got this son" my dad yelled from the crowd. Soon the villagers began cheering me on, even my friends from behind Drago were starting to yell on encouragements for me.

"Ready?" he asked, unsheathing his sword and getting in a fighting position.

"Ready" I replied and made the first charge, and in the second you heard the sound of steel against Gronckle Iron clashing. From the first strike I was nearly knocked onto my back. I underestimated his strength, and nearly paid for it. I managed to push his sword away (with my sword of course) and moved back to regain to my stance.

"It's never smart to attack first Hiccup" he commented as he twirled his wrist hand that was holding the sword. "Been a while since I've engaged someone in a duel" he continued.

"Cause people were afraid to fight against you?" I asked.

"Because people weren't stupid to fight against me" he replied, and there were a few laughs from his men, the Outcasts and Berserkeres. _Yeah, I kind of walked into that. _

Then he swung at my abdomen but I ducked and rolled to the side. He made another attack at my chest, but I brought my sword up just in time, and just managed to push him back. "I'm impressed Hiccup...those men at Atlatka truly knew what they were teaching you" he said with a smile.

"They had their doubts about me...but I proved them wrong" I replied, holding the sword with both hands, and in a position ready for his attack.

"You also proved me wrong" he said, and I saw a sadistic smile forming on his lips.

"What are you talking about?" I asked, as I lowered my guard, but not by much.

"You all..." he spoke aloud for everyone to hear "...do not know what this man is capable of...not only has he proved his loyalty and honour, but is also a _true Viking_" he emphasized the last two words.

"I've always been a Viking Drago" I replied, not knowing where he was going with that statement. Was he trying to convince me to join him,

or show how wrong the village was in their judgement of me?

"I'm talking about what defined a 'True Viking' before the events of the Red Death...before you shot down Toothless" he said, not breaking eye contact with me. _"No, he couldn't know about that! He COULDN'T"

—

"Killing a dragon defined you as one, but what does that have to do with this?" my father asked from the crowd.

"Tell me Hiccup...how did it feel?" Drago asked. I felt my heart racing, my hands began to shake, and people saw that by the uncharacteristic way the sword was shaking. I glanced to the crowd, and they all began to have that same facial expression of shock and surprise, and back to Drago who was loving every moment of this.

"How did it feel to take a life...a _Dragon's life_" he yelled, causing everyone to gasp as their fears were confirmed. I lowered my head and sword, not wanting to make eye contact with anyone, but I could feel all their gazes. I could feel them carving their way to my very soul, and I could feel Astrid's gaze...I didn't dare look up because I still wasn't ready to confront her.

"But I suppose it was necessary, otherwise you wouldn't be here with us today. It was either kill, or be killed" Drago continued. But how? How did he know about that. I never told anyone about that, except Astrid and her mother, and I know that they would never tell anyone about that, unless I gave them permission to.

"H-h-How d-do you k-know about t-that?" I stuttered. I began feeling light headed. I had to get my heart rate down, otherwise I would collapse then and there. I managed to get a grip on my hands, but the uncertainty was still there.

"I saw the whole thing Hiccup...why do you think that dragon didn't respond to your methods...why do you think it didn't form a bond with you when you raised your hand out to it...it was not its self" he said in a dark tone and a smile that clearly said he knew more.

"You...you had something to do with it" I said. I was still recovering from my shock at the realization.

"Guilty as charged" he said, raising his hands in mock defense.

"WHY!?" I yelled in complete anger, which caused everyone in the crowd to take a step back, but Drago was unfazed by my outburst.

"Isn't it obvious? I wanted to test you. I wanted to see how far you'd go to protect _yourself. _So I put you in a position where I knew you had to decide who's life it was going to be...yours or the dragon's" he answered.

Words cannot describe the rage that was building inside me at that moment.

"I heard about the Red Death being defeated, by someone from this

tribe...so I followed up the leads, and I had a few of my men perform recon flights during the night, and sneak into your village to gather whatever information they could. Then they told me about you, and brought me the plans of your trip. I followed you in the shadows for those two years, I watched you progress in your skills, but I was still unsure. So when you had to perform the survival test of surviving in the wild for one week, while being hunted by Ripper, I controlled that dragon...I gave it orders to kill you, and to not form a bond with you...that you were a target to kill...and that left you with two options...kill or be killed...I guess you chose the first option" he explained, his smile not faltering for one minute.

He took pride in seeing me in this state. My grip had tightened on Stinger, and I wanted to charge him and cut him down where he stood. But he wanted me to lose my composure and fall for his trap. I wasn't going to let that happen.

"But my tests didn't stop there. I gave Alvin a test, to see how far he would go and how far you would protect your village. I gave Dagur a test to kidnap Astrid, to see how you would react and to see your emotional reaction and how far you would go to protect them. I wanted to see how you would handle yourself, and you did generally well...but then was the test where I got in your head" he began.

He was trying to do it again. He was going to make me feel bad, which I do, for what I did to the people I care about.

"I still wonder if you knew all those horrible things weren't true, why did you get angry? And why did you take all your anger out on Astrid? The person who was going to tell you everything, the girl who wanted to be there when you woke up? Why Hiccup?" he asked with a smile.

"I was a fool for letting my anger control me...I guess you could say because it was my friends who pulled the prank on me, which resulted in bodily harm...I was angry and I deserved to be angry...but what I didn't deserve was to take out all that anger out on her...she never deserved it, after all she's done for me" I answered. I could see his smile falter because he was expecting me to lose my composure and charge him. But I wasn't done.

"I had to kill that dragon, and it's been on my conscience ever since. If there was any way I could have let it live I would not hesitate to go back and do it. But now I know that you were behind it, my mind is at ease, because in truth...I did put that dragon out of its misery from being controlled by you" I spoke.

"Well, you truly are a remarkable man Hiccup, but you still have a lot to learn" he said before charging me. I had no time to react and before I knew it, I was on the ground with the tip of his blade at my neck. That's when we heard a loud roar and a few Vikings flying out of the way, before Toothless ran up and tackled Drago off of me.

"Toothless down!" I yelled getting back up, not liking what he was doing. But what I really found strange was Drago laughing among his growls.

"It's alright Hiccup...I was hoping this would happen" he said, and

in that instant a huge black shadow tackled Toothless off Drago and the crowd dispersed, not to be hit by the two dragons coming their way. I ran to see through the opening and saw...and I couldn't believe my eyes...another Night Fury, except this one was bigger than Toothless. It had more muscle, even a few larger scales that I guess come with age on its head, back and tail. It was holding Toothless to the ground and snarling menacingly at him, but what was really weird...Toothless didn't fight back. I saw something in his eyes, that I rarely saw.

_Fear _

That's when the larger Night Fury moved off of him and gave a soul-shattering roar at Toothless who tried to sink further to the ground. "Good dragon Deathwing" I heard Drago say, who was now up on his feet and dusting himself off. He wasn't the slightest bit fazed like a normal person would be when they were tackled by a mad Night Fury.

"Odd...I didn't expect your Night Fury to surrender so easily to Deathwing" he said, curiosity plastered on his face as he watched Deathwing walk around Toothless who was still on the ground quivering.

"Toothless what's wrong?!" I yell at him, truly worried about him. I've never seen him act like this.

"It can't be" I heard Drago mutter and I looked to him. His face was in a momentary shock, but a smile was creeping on his face. "Is this where you've been all this time? No wonder why we couldn't find you" he said, and when I followed his gaze, he was looking at Toothless.

"What are you talking about? What do you know about Toothless!?" I ask him, getting ready in an attack stance.

"Huh, I know now that Deathwing is Toothless' older brother" he said, glancing at me then back at the two dragons.

"What? That's impossible. I found Toothless alone, dragons would never leave their family behind" I said. Based on what research we've collected over the years, dragons are social creatures.

"They would never leave them yes...but you should know _when _they would leave them" he said turning back to me.

That's when I realized, dragons only leave members of their family or herd behind when they are sick, frail, and the runts.

"You and Toothless are a lot more alike than you and the village realize...you were both the runts of your family!" he remarked. "I remember Toothless now. He was laid and hatched 7 years after Deathwing hatched, and right from his first moment, we saw that he was smaller than most baby Night Furies. We never thought he would survive...but it was only thanks to his mother and, somewhat his father that he survived...but his brother and the other Night Furies in his family never gave him a second thought. They always ignored him and left him on his own. Deathwing made sure to show him who's boss, and I guess Toothless hasn't forgotten that" he said looking back at the two dragons. Toothless made no move to get up, clearly

afraid by Deathwing.

"Now where were we" I heard and I just managed to get my sword up when he charged me. I was pushed back a few feet, but still on my feet, well foot. He unleashed another strike and I brought my sword across to block his strike and held it there. I was holding the handle and part of the tip of the blade above my face as he was pressing against my blade with his, and if I gave way, I would be cut in half.

"You are weak Hiccup. You aren't strong physically or mentally...It was a brave attempt to stall for your friend but rest assured he won't be able to make it" he said before pulling back and releasing another strike. I again blocked it and we brought our swords side by side this time, that our faces were mere inches apart.

"Maybe I won't kill you when I beat you" he said in a sadistic tone. That's when he brought his mouth near my ear, "I'll have my men tie you up and drag you to my house, and make you witness me _rape _your girlfriend on my wedding bed" he whispered so that I could only hear it. My eyes went wide when he said that and all that rage I was keeping under the lid was nearly ready to explode.

"I can already imagine it...you watching helplessly with your mouth gagged while you hear Astrid's screams, pleading you to do something...but you know you can only sit there and watch while her world comes crashing down around her" he said in a dark whisper.

_That. Was. It. _

"AHHH!" I yelled as I pushed him back and watched him falter.

"That's it Hiccup! Get angry!" he yelled with a smile. How dare he say that about her! I'll make him pay! I charged him again and brought my blade down with as much force as I could. He blocked it.

"Feel that anger coursing through your veins! The power it gives you" he spoke as he moved back because of my constant strikes. Oh Thor I could feel it, and I will have him experience every bit of it!

"You feel stronger...faster...you have no objective but you cut down the target in front of you!" he continued on with that smile of his.

"Hiccup stop!" Astrid yelled.

"Son...calm down!" my dad yelled.

Everyone was yelling at me to calm down, but I couldn't. Not after what he said.

I charged him one more time, and with all my strength brought Stinger down, but to my shock he blocked it, and when I looked up to his face, it was one of amusement and disappointment.

"But anger also has its weaknesses" he said, before he punched my with his left arm. I stumbled back a bit, but brought Stinger in for

another strike as he was walking to me now. He blocked it with his sword and used it to guide my strike away from his body.

"You become reckless" he said as he grabbed my leather armour and brought me close to him and punched me back with the knuckles of his right hand.

I stumbled back, holding left cheek, the burnt area and where he punched.

"You become blinded by it to see the true attacks" he said and kicked the dirt into my eyes. I stumbled back even further, rubbing my eyes vigorously to get the dust out of them.

"You become overpowered" he said and gave me one hard kick to the face. I went flying back about ten feet, back to the centre of the makeshift fighting ring we were in. I coughed onto the ground, and quickly got back and turned around.

"And..." he said before he raised his sword and brought it down. I brought my sword to try and block it but all I heard was a sound I never dreamt of hearing. It was a shattering tear and as if in slow motion, I saw Stinger break in half, the top half flying in a random direction, and looked down at the remaining half, and all I saw was a sharp tear from where it broke.

"...It's the last mistake you'll ever make" he said before it happened.

"HICCUP!" Astrid screamed.

"SON!" my dad yelled.

But the funny thing is, I barely heard them. My breathing had slowed down and I felt different, as if something had filled me. I looked around and saw everything in slow motion. I looked to my sides and saw the villagers with their mouths open. Some of the women were beginning to cry and the men were trying to move forward but the guards stopped them.

I saw my dad on the ground with about six men trying to hold him down. I even saw Aaron trying to help him, but he was also tackled to the ground, and Ingrid had covered Riptide's eyes and there was a look of pure horror on her face. When I looked to the front, at the altar where my friends were, I could see their stunned faces and they were being forced onto their knees as they were trying to break into a run for me.

But then my eyes met Astrid's.

She had tears in her eyes, and was desperately trying to break free of Drago's second in command but he held her back. She tried kicking him, and hitting him but he was too strong for her. He forced her onto her knees like my friends.

She looked up to me...those once caring, emerald blue eyes now were filled with fear, heartbreak, terror and sadness, and I could see the tears starting to stream down her beautiful face, and when I looked down to the ground...that's when I noticed it.

I saw twelve inches of a silver blade, stained with fresh blood, dripping off its bottom edge...sticking out of my abdomen.

****A/N: Talk about a cliffhanger huh? ;)****

26. Live To Fight Another Day

Hiccup's POV

I dropped to my knees and used my hands to stop from falling completely flat on the ground. I could feel the blade pass through my body ever so slowly and it would only stop until the tip hit the ground, or the handle hit my back, meaning the whole blade had gone through. It was sickening, I could feel the cold, hard metal edge its way through my flesh and coming out the other side. I couldn't stand it. It wasn't painful but uncomfortable would be an understatement. I closed my eyes and gritted my teeth, trying to avoid seeing the blood drip out of my wound, down the blade and onto the ground.

That's when I felt the blade stop moving. I opened my eyes to see the tip of the sword had reached the ground and I officially had a sword right through me. I was too scared to breathe in even. Every time I did, I felt my body constrict around the blade, hugging it and letting it go.

"Oh Hiccup...why did you force this upon yourself?" I heard Drago say. I looked up and saw him walking around me. His hands holding each other behind his back, and a disappointed look on his face.

"You could have joined me. I could have shown you ways to tame dragons...dragons you didn't even know, taken you to places you could only dream of...you could have been one of my commanders as well" he lectured.

"S-sorry...but...I-I don't...l-listen to...lunatics" I breathed out.

"Don't breathe so fast Hiccup" he said. "If you breathe slowly, you will be slowing your blood flow, and that's what you want right now to prevent from bleeding out. But that's not going to be a problem since that sword is stopping you from bleeding profoundly" he said with a smile, walking up right in front of me and looking down at me.

"Why...n-not just...kill me now?"

"Oh, if you've noticed that sword was not meant to kill you, just to incapacitate you. You're not the first one to be in that position, there have been many other prisoners who've experienced what you're going through right now"

"I made sure I missed any vital organ in abdomen...well it might have gone through a portion of your liver, but nothing that won't do permanent damage...that is if it's not left in there where bacteria on the sword could start infecting you" he said as if it were just a thought. "But you have to wonder how many people I've cut up in the past to know where they're vital organs are and the exact place to injure them and not kill them huh?" he mocked me. He then walked

behind and I felt him grab the handle of his sword.

"I wonder what would happen if I twisted this while it's still in you? Maybe cut up more flesh, make a bigger wound? The possibilities are endless" he said, and all of a sudden he pulled the sword out and I fell to the ground, clutching my wound which began to bleed even more.

"Don't worry...you'll live for another six hours if that wound isn't patched up" he said, taking out a cloth and wiping the blood off his sword.

"S-so what now...a-are you...going to...k-kill me?" I asked, increasing my grip on the wound.

"Maybe, but death would be such an easy way out for you now wouldn't it?" he asked. I couldn't stay on the ground and look weak, not with everyone watching. I lost half a leg, a through and through cut shouldn't stop me. With some effort, I raised myself up, my left hand holding across my abdomen over the wound, while I left my right arm to dangle in the air.

"Well, looks like you still have some fight left in you" he said. "That's good, because there two men here who would really love some payback...Dagur, Alvin!" he yelled, and said men walked to his side, both had smiles on their faces. Snoggletog and definitely come early for them.

"You two can have your fun with him" he said with a wave of his hand, and they came up and grabbed both my hands and started to drag me away.

"Nah ah" he called out, causing them to stop and turn around. "Do it here...in front of everyone" he said looking at the crowd. The smiles on Dagur's and Alvin's faces grew even more.

"Oh, got ya' commander" Alvin said, and pulled me with his left hand and gave one right hook to my face, on the burnt side. "I'm going to enjoy this boy!" he yelled.

I clutched my cheek, but then I felt a pair of hands grab my shoulders and when I looked up I saw Dagur bring his face down and headbutted me, making me fall back onto the ground.

"Me too!" he said as he pulled me up and kicked me in the abdomen, right where my wound was and gave me a left hook.

"Let this be a lesson...to any one who dares defy, that they will meet the same fate as your hero over here" Drago yelled to the crowd.

I felt another right hook to my face and fell to my knees. I could feel blood bleeding into my mouth from a cut lip, and I was sure the burnt side of my face was also bleeding a bit. I looked up and my eyes met with Astrid's. I had never seen so much hurt in those eyes, and it hurt me more that I was causing the pain in her that she was witnessing now. I had clearly failed to notice the extent to which she loves me.

Astrid's POV

I watched Hiccup get beaten by Dagur and Alvin in front of the whole crowd. This day was not even what I was hoping for. I was hoping for some way that Hiccup would show up, which he did, and come up with a clever plan to save us...instead he challenged Drago for my hand, and this is where it brought him, and I'm watching him suffer.

I heard his pained screams and yelps every time Alvin and Dagur kicked him, punched him, threw him...it was torture to watch. Every scream he made was like a dagger to my heart. And if that wasn't enough, the stains of his blood on the ground was only salt to the already open and hurting wound.

He tried to fight back, trying to time his swings, and he did connect a few times, but that only made them fight harder. They yelled that he would pay for that...and he did.

I saw Alvin pull him up from the ground and threw him to Dagur, who got him in a death grip and held his left hand in a position I was begging it wasn't. "I don't think you've suffered enough Hiccup, let me see what happens when I do this!" he yelled and we all heard a popping sound followed by Hiccup's scream. I could do nothing but watch as he was literally being beaten to death. Dagur had just dislocated his shoulder and let him go soon after that, and we could see his left hand hanging unnaturally loose.

"Drago!" I called. His second in command was still holding me, keeping my hands behind my back and keeping me on my knees. I saw Drago turn and walk towards me, and stopped right in front of me.

"Please stop this..." I begged "...I'll let you do anything you want to me...ANYTHING! Just please stop his pain!" I begged, a new stream of tears flowing down my eyes. When I looked up to his eyes, I saw nothing but amusement at the situation.

"Oh...my dear Astrid...he has to pay for insolence...challenging me on my wedding day was his mistake and as future chief of this village and to show my power to the people and my wife-to-be...I have to do this" he said in a mocking tone. He then lifted my chin up, our faces were only inches apart. "And don't worry...I will have my fun with you in bed...with him watching" he said, turning my face to see Hiccup hit the ground with full force.

I shook my face from his grip, and looked at him just to see him smirk.

"You're a heartless monster with no conscience!" I yelled at him.

"Eh...I've been called worse" he said with a smile and turned back to the fight in front of him which he, his men, the Outcasts and the Berserkers were all enjoying.

I looked over to the Chief, who was being tied up and forced to watch his son's public beating and possible execution. I couldn't imagine how hard it is for him...or any parent for that matter to watch their child be beaten to death in front of an audience. Hiccup was the future heir of this tribe, and to have him being beaten and stabbed like a prisoner was something that no one was ever expecting...not in

a million years.

I saw the Chief was trying so hard not to cry then and there. Hiccup had gone through so much emotional pain for over ten years, and I think the only thing that comes close is the pain he was receiving from the hands of those two. They were not holding back.

They had been thwarted by Hiccup and us too many times in the past, and they were making him pay dearly for it...and us by watching his pain.

If they hadn't captured our dragons and hidden them, I would have called Stormfly by now who would have skewered every single one of his men right now if she showed up. I could only wish though...not act.

Hiccup's POV

"Had enough Hiccup?" Alvin asked as he held me up by my neck with his left hand. I was too tired, beaten and battered to reply, but I still wasn't going to yield to him. I simply spat some blood in his face...blood that was filling my mouth now, and my leather armour has been soaked by the blood from my wound, and I was becoming light-headed by the moment...which was in no way a good sign.

"Be like that then" he said and punched me square in the gut, where the wound was, so hard that I heard everyone cringe at the impact. He then dropped me onto the ground, and it seemed for a moment that the beating had stopped.

"You've used your dragons against us Hiccup, now tell us what do you think of ours" Dagur said, and I felt two gusts of wing blow in opposite directions. When I looked up, I was shocked to say the least. I wasn't surprised by Alvin's dragon which I had seen before, but it was the one behind Dagur. It was a...Skrill!

"W-Where...d-did you get...a...Skrill" I breathed out, coughing out blood at the same time.

"There are more than one Skrill Hiccup, and Drago knew where to find them! He gave me one as a means of friendship between our two tribes and I was more than happy to learn how to tame it!" he yelled, that crazy look he always had in his eye became even more deranged.

"But we won't let our dragons kill ya' " Alvin said as he came up and grabbed me again by my neck with his left hand and held me up.

"We want that pleasure for ourselves" Dagur commented and they both withdrew their swords. They were both going to skewer me, and I knew that would be it.

"Say goodbye Dragon Conqueror" Alvin said and they both raised their swords and I closed my eyes, waiting to feel two cold blades run through me.

"STOP!" I heard Drago yell, and the blades didn't come.

"Drop him" he said, and after some time, Alvin reluctantly agreed to. I fell back to the ground with a hard thud and lay face down, bleeding, with broken bones and incredibly sore muscles and bruises

if this day is over...and if I live through it.

I then saw that Dagur had tossed his sword a few feet in front of me. I don't know for what purpose but I knew I needed something to defend myself with. I couldn't use my left hand at all, so I had to use my right hand to drag myself to the sword.

"My, my...persistent are we?" I heard Drago comment as he walked beside me. I heard the his men laugh at my predicament. I was in a sorry position, but I didn't want to die in that. When I was within grabbing distance of the sword, I reached out and it took all my strength. When my fingers were no more than a centimeter away, Drago stepped on my hand, causing me to yell.

I looked up at him, "Nuh uh uh" he said with a shake of his index finger and before I knew it I felt an incredible pain rock through my right arm, to see that he had driven his sword through it, and I couldn't help but scream in pain. There was no way I could move my hand now since he had it impaled.

However he didn't have it for long and withdrew his sword, and moved me belly-up with his foot.

"This is quite a sight...Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third at my mercy, at my feet, dying..." he said with a smile. However, I felt a slight movement beneath me, which meant something was underground, and it appeared he didn't notice.

"Did you really think you could beat me in a fight Hiccup...or did you at least think you would survive?" he asked.

"I-I...prob-probably...should...s-start...thinking those...p-plans...through" I wheezed.

" (Smirk) Start? What makes you think I'm going to keep you alive? Well other than witnessing your beloved Astrid be taken by another man" he said.

"W-Where's...R-Ripper?" I asked.

"Oh don't worry about him, my men will find him soon enough, and when they do, he'll follow you to the afterlife" he said kneeling down and speaking to my face.

"The...then you should...k-know...he didn't come...a-alone"

"Oh really, who did he bring with him?" he asked. "I think ahead of you Hiccup, my men will come back with Ripper from that forest in moments. I think three steps ahead of you. What makes you think you'll win?" he asks.

"B-Because...I-I think...f-four steps...ahead" I said, and at that moment, a Whispering Death burst out of the ground near us, knocking Drago off his feet.

That's when I looked up and saw two figures hop off Razorcut. "Razorcut...rapid fire!" I heard Ripper yell, and Razorcut let out four blasts of accurate fireballs at Drago's men, setting them on fire or blowing them off. I then saw four other dragons fly out of

the hole in the ground and started attacking the Berserkers, Outcasts and Drago's men.

"Hookfang!"

"Stormfly!"

"Meatlug!"

"Barf-Belch!"

I heard the teens yell. That's when I heard a loud thunder sound, which could only mean "Thornado!" my dad yelled. All the dragons had showed up and were taking the fight to the enemy.

Normal POV

Ripper had started engaging the men while Heather had got off and started untying the ropes that had the teens bound. "You found Ripper?" Astrid asked.

"Sort of, we were working on freeing the dragons...sorry it took so long" she said as she freed the others. "Where's Hiccup?" she asked but soon saw his body sprawled out near the hole Razorcut had made. "Ripper!" Said man looked at her after slaying one of Drago's men. "We have to get Hiccup out of here!" she yelled. Ripper looked to see Hiccup on the ground, but before he could say anything Astrid made a dash for him.

In the confusion, Toothless had managed to knock Deathwing off of him and bounded up to where Hiccup lay.

"We can't stay here long...we have to leave...their army is right on the docks!" Ripper yelled. Everyone agreed with him. If they stayed, they would be captured again. They had to escape.

Drago had regained his senses and realized they were under attack, and he saw Toothless by Hiccup's side. He had had enough of that boy. He withdrew his sword and began making his way towards him but before he did, he heard a yell behind him and just managed to block it, but was knocked onto his back.

"Nobody hurts my son and gets away with it!" Stoick said and made another battle cry raising his hammer and engaging Drago.

Astrid had reached Hiccup's body to see he was not moving. "Hiccup" she said in quiet tone. Toothless nudged his head against his rider's, hoping for some response. Astrid was too overwhelmed with emotions that she didn't notice the Outcast soldier making her way behind her.

"Ugh" she heard, and when she turned, she saw her father holding a blood stained sword. "Nobody hurts my little girl" he said and immediately ran to his daughter and hugged her. They then heard a shrill from above, and Stormfly landed near them, glad that her rider was okay.

"Papa, he's not moving!" Astrid said, clearly panic-stricken.

"It's okay Astrid, he'll make it through...I promise you" he said and went to work on pressing down on Hiccup's chest, hoping air was going in. All of a sudden, there was a huge shadow that came over the battlefield, and when people looked up, they could only see a large dragon, flying towards them. This dragon used its wings and scooped up some of the enemies and deposited them in the ocean.

"Torch!" Tuff yelled.

"Right on time!" Ripper said, glad to see their old friend.

The Typhoomerang landed in the centre of the village, knocking away any more hostiles with its wings, or picking them in his mouth and tossing them in a random direction. "Ok, everyone on Torch!" Ripper yelled, and soon most of the women and children were on Torch's back, including Aaron, Ingrid and their son Riptide.

Ripper gave the order for Torch to take off and he did, with Snotlout, and Fishlegs providing support on their dragons.

"Astrid, take Hiccup on Stormfly and take off!" Ripper yelled. She didn't waste a second as Stormfly lowered her back for her rider to pull Hiccup on her and take off.

"Heather you're with me!" Ripper yelled as he and Heather quickly hopped on Toothless' back since he needed a rider, and luckily Ripper knew how to control the pedal.

"Chief!" Ripper called, only to see their chief in battle with Drago. Toothless fired a plasma blast knocking Drago into a few barrels, away from Stoick.

"Sir we need to leave now!" he spoke. They then saw a small group of soldiers heading for them, but only to be blown away by Thornado, who also landed near his rider.

"No Ripper, you need to leave" Stoick told him.

"Sir, what do you mean?"

"A Chief cannot abandon his men, and there are still some men and women left here, and I cannot leave them without a Chief" he said strongly, while resting his hand on Thornado's snout. His dragon was worried for him, he didn't want to leave without his rider.

"I'll be fine Ripper...make sure Hiccup is too" he said, and Ripper could have sworn he saw a tear fall from the Chief's eye. "Take Thornado with you!" he said, and urged his dragon to take off, and follow Ripper. Thornado didn't want to go anywhere, but his rider was telling him so.

"COME ON THORNADO! GO!" Stoick yelled, and finally the blue dragon did just that, following Ripper on Toothless, while Razorcut and the Twins provided cover fire for the two to make their exit.

Drago had recovered from his hit and watched the dragons disappear into the sky. He had never been angry in a long time...except now. "Get those brats!" he yelled and five dragons flew above him, with riders, towards the group were making their escape.

Luckily Ripper was keeping an eye to see if they were being followed, and saw the five dragons coming after them. "Ruff, Tuff, move up ahead to the others, I need you out of Razorcut's range" he yelled.

"What for?" Ruff asked.

"Trust me. Razorcut...spine tornado!" he yelled, and Razorcut nodded and headed to face the five dragons. The others had disappeared over the clouds now, and Ripper presumed they were a safe distance away for his dragon to perform that attack. Soon he heard yells and screams, and saw five dragons falling down into the ocean below them. Razorcut caught up to them.

"Good dragon" he said, and the two rejoined the others in the clouds.

Astrid was not doing so good. She had Hiccup in her lap and he was barely breathing, the blood from his wounds were soaking his clothes and staining her dress, and by that amount, he had already lost a large amount of blood.

"Where to now?" Snotlout asked.

"I know where" Ripper replied.

"What about Hiccup...he'll die without medical attention!" Astrid said.

"Don't worry, I know someone who can help" Ripper replied, as the group of survivors flew to the one person who could help them and Hiccup.

****A/N: Well I know you guys waited for this chapter and hear it is. Hope you liked it. And I've also updated my other story, _The Past Defines the Future_, in case you were wondering. ****

****Take care everyone!****

27. Recovery and Truths

****A/N: Hey guys, a friend and avid reviewer of my stories has told me that I need to focus on one story at a time since I have 3 stories of HTTYD, and he's right, so I'll try and update as fast as possible, and since this story has been getting so much hype, I'm continuing with this. But I will tell you if I plan to update the other two stories if I do.****

Hiccup's POV

Why does my head hurt? I thought. I didn't even want to open my eyes because of the tremendous pain I felt all over my body. My stomach and chest felt like I had a Gronckle on them, my hand stung as if a Scauldron sprayed me with its acid, and I can't even get started on the sore muscles.

I had to know where I was, so I slowly, yet painfully opened my eyes. I was met with the flickering light of a fire in front of me. I pulled the covers from my chest and saw that my entire chest and

abdomen were bandaged up. I rubbed the sleepiness from my eyes and then noticed that my right arm had been damaged completely between my wrist and elbow. Then something moving in the far end of the...cave as it appeared...caught my attention. I squinted and then noticed that it was Toothless, who was fast asleep.

"How did I get here? Considering where here is" I said aloud. I then proceeded to remove my blankets and get up but fell back down clutching my abdomen.

"Hiccup!" I heard someone call me and soon felt a pair of hands around me, and help me settle back down on my covers.

"Ripper?" I asked, recognizing the voice.

"Ripper, is he awake?" I heard another voice that belonged to my mother's enter the cave.

"Yeah, he's awake. He just tried to get up" he said, propping up some pillows behind my back and helping me sit up.

"What the heck happened?" I said as I grasped my stomach area.

"You nearly died, that's what happened. I told you shouldn't have gone through with that plan" Ripper said as he sat by the fire, sounding mad.

"I shouldn't have agreed with this plan. I mean what kind of mother agrees to a plan where her only child might not come out alive? I've been way out of contact with people" she said, rubbing her temple and closing her eyes. Clearly she was extremely worried.

"I'm fine mom" I replied. I didn't want her to worry so much.

"Fine is understatement Hiccup. When they brought you here, you had lost a large amount of blood, you had bruises all over your face, chest and abdomen, a dislocated shoulder, three cracked ribs, and a through stab wound in your right arm...how in anyway is that fine?" she asked sitting next to me.

"Not to mention you've been out for two weeks" Ripper put in.

"What!? I've been out for two weeks?" How could that be. It felt like I was asleep for only half the day.

"He's telling the truth Hiccup, you've been out for fifteen days since the time you came, and fixing you up wasn't easy at all, because you were still semi-conscious" my mom said.

"Astrid and I had to hold you down when she popped your shoulder back in to place; you slapped me across the face because of the pain" Ripper said with a small chuckle, letting his hand rub the part of his face that I presumably hit. Wait, what?

"As-Astrid helped with...m-my wounds?" I was surprised.

"Even I was surprised, but she insisted that she helped your healing" Ripper said.

"She told me that it was the least she could do after you saved from her being married off to Drago" my mom said.

"I feel there's more behind to it" I said, knowing her all too well.

"Ripper, could you give us some space?" my mom asked, but the look her eyes gave was for him to leave...immediately.

"Sure thing ma'am" he said, getting up and dusting himself off.

"Where is everyone by the way?" I asked, before he left.

"It's night right now, they're all asleep in the different caves in this place, we had to get a cave just for you so because you were our number one priority when we landed" Ripper said before walking out, presumably to his "quarters".

"Astrid told me everything, Hiccup" my mom said after a few minutes. I guess she wanted to wait until Ripper was out of earshot...or maybe he knew that already and she was figuring out how to deliver the news.

"S-she did?" I asked, expecting to get a huge and possible disappointed lecture from my mother...but I don't know why I'm worried since I deserve it.

"Why Hiccup? I understand yelling but throwing this at her?" she said opening her hand to reveal the wooden ring box. I hung my head in shame, not wanting to make eye contact with her.

"I understand that you were mad at the prank your friends pulled on you, but she didn't deserve any of the pain and anger you had inside you to be directed at her. Not to mention the pain and suffering you put her through when she had to watch you fight Drago, the blade going through...I just shiver at that thought and there she had to watch that happen, along with everyone else" she said.

I nodded my head. What she was saying was all right.

"Well, it was the only way for Ripper to free the dragons, which I did suspect were caged and they were, and we've brought most of the people of Berk back, the women and children anyway" I said, trying to look at the bright side.

"That is all well and good Hiccup, believe me, but Astrid is the subject here, because from what she's told me about you, about everything that you, her and the people of Berk have gone through over the years, you clearly have feelings for her and she does for you...a mother can see that as plain as day, and what you did will not just heal overnight" she explained. I never made eye contact with her because I didn't want to see the disappointment in her eyes, but I could feel her gaze...and she wasn't looking away.

" (sigh) You know she stayed by your side for fifteen days straight" she said, and from the corner of my eye, saw her direct her gaze towards the fire. "She never left your side, she sat where you're resting now...sitting back against that rock with your head and part of your upper body on her lap. She had her palm over your forehead,

and never breaking eye contact with your closed eyes. She was begging for you to open them. She even cleaned and replaced your bandages and always insisted that she stayed to do it when I came with the supplies"

"One day, when I came in, I heard her praying to Odin, Freyja, Thor, and all the Gods in Valhalla, asking them to protect you...asking them to bring you back to the world, to just open your eyes. She held your hand, hoping that you'd squeeze it to show that you were still here, and hadn't left. She never left your side" she said, turning her gaze back on me.

"Where is she now?" I ask, looking up at her, my eyes brimming with tears.

"She's out stretching her legs with her dragon. She had been cooped up in here for fifteen days looking after you...she needed a break"

"She needs a break...a long break from me" I said sadly looking at the fire.

"Hiccup" she said strongly, causing me to look at her. "I know I haven't been the mother you wanted me to be...I left when you were just five or six years old and never came back. I was never there to comfort you, to watch you grow, to help you, to support you and to give you advice but know that I never stopped loving you, and that you never left my mind even for a second...but on that note, I wasn't there to help you about girls" she said with a small laugh, which made me blush and I rubbed the back of my neck absentmindedly.

"I guess it's not too late to start now...I remember Astrid, I used to babysit you two sometimes when Ingrid and Aaron had to go off on fishing trips or searching for the dragon's nest. Believe it or not, you two were really close back then. You always went exploring in the forests and would be out till late, making me all worried and searching the whole island for you two."

"I knew it was always you with the ideas to go exploring, hoping to find a dragon and kill it and prove your father and I proud, and Astrid was more than keen to join you on that since she wanted to be the best shield-maiden in Berk's history. I even remember the other kids, Snotlout, the Twins and Fishlegs; you started hanging together, but they were resentful towards you because of how small and un-Viking you were. They only accepted Astrid, and one day when you came back, and you were crying, you told me that Snotlout had threw mud at your face and the Twins had dumped some eels on you, and you screamed because you were surprised, and they taunted you...rest assured I gave my brother in law a damn stern talk about how his son was treating his cousin, but when you came in and I took you, I saw Astrid punch Snotlout in the face and yelled at the Twins before storming off. She was mad that they hurt you. But you weren't there to see that. She cares for you Hiccup, then and it's grown ever stronger over the years" she told me.

I remember that time. I was scared to go near eels for a whole month and I avoided Snotlout and them for that month. I was only five.

"This prank, she tried to tell you, Hiccup. She was just on the

borders of the village when the explosion happened. She didn't come to the forge because she told me she was petrified. She recalled that as people ran past her, grabbing buckets of water, she just saw the huge flames and almost the entire forge engulfed in flames. She thought that no one could have survived that. That's when she went back into the forest where the others were and told them about it and what was going on in town. She said those "things" about you because she was so mad at them and she wasn't thinking...that's what she told me, and she said it in a convincing voice because if one of them asked something, then she would have tackled them and started beating them up and that's what she did when Snotlout said something" she said.

"She even told me about the fight between you and Drago...how nervous and scared she was watching you fight him. _Scared_ Hiccup, scared...and Hoffersons hardly get scared. And when saw that blade go through you, when she heard you scream and when she saw you get hurt again and again and again...it felt like a dagger to the heart, and this was after you nearly drove her to commit suicide" she said.

"I did drive her...her mother stopped her...I don't deserve her, not after what I've done to her" I said, letting a tear run down my cheek. I never deserved her. After what my mom has just told me, she was always there for me...and I was too blind to see it. "Besides, she wouldn't even talk to me now."

"You're right Hiccup, she might not...but when she talked to me, I could easily see that you meant the world to her. She doesn't want it to be over with you. It will take time to pick up the pieces, but you two should work it out" she said getting up.

"Now get some rest son, you need it" she said giving me a kiss on the cheek and walking out.

All of a sudden, I felt a push on my head and when I turned, I was met with two green eyes. "Hey Toothless" I smiled and rubbed his neck while he nuzzled me, glad that I was awake. "How are you doing?"

He growled something that went along the lines of that he was probably worried sick, and how could you do that. That's when I remembered him being tackled by that other Night Fury. "So, you have a brother huh?" I asked, and he turned his head away as if he understood and that he didn't want to talk about it.

"I guess we aren't that different at all" I said. I could see the entrance of the cave. It wasn't that big, and I could see the night sky from it. "Come on bud, let's go for a walk" I said, slowly getting up, with a bit help from him,. I used Toothless as a support as we were walking.

As soon as we exited the cave, I was met with a cool breeze. I looked up and saw the moon high in the night sky, with the millions of stars in the sky. On any night they would look magnificent...they still do, but I'm just not in the mood to think of it like that.

We were in you could say the centre of the dragons sanctuary as there were cliffs that surrounded us on all sides, and the dragons could fly directly up and out, if they chose to. I saw Torch in the distance, resting peacefully. It was actually a coincidence that we ran into him. When we ran into him, it appeared he was on his way to

Berk...thank Odin we got to him otherwise Drago would have captured him. Instead, we got him to help in getting most people to safety by flying them here.

Toothless and I continued on our path that took us to the large lake in the middle of this place. It would give me a chance to think about what I would say to Astrid the next time I see her...that is hoping she'll talk or even look at me for that matter. But I had to try...even if it takes me ten years, I'll spend every day of my life begging her for forgiveness.

"Hiccup" I heard a voice behind me. It wasn't the voice I was hoping for, but at the same time it was a voice I was dreading because I knew he would want blood for what I did. "We need to talk" I heard him say.

I slowly turned around and sure enough, Astrid's father was standing behind me.

****A/N:** Well I've just finished exams, so I had time to write this. So if you guys agree, just leave in a review if you want me to finish this story before my other two stories. Or I can give you guys a heads up here if I will update the others, so that you know what story to look out for next time. ******

****Also,** for those M-readers out there, do you want me to post the special scenes, as a one off chapter, for my stories, or do you want me to convert this to a M-rated story?******

****Take care!****

28. Parents and Friends' Sides

****A/N:** Based on the reviews I saw, I might not raise this story to an M-RATED one, but might just make a one shot of the lemon scene if you all would like it. Anyway, back to the story. ******

Hiccup's POV

"G-good evening s-s-sir" I stuttered. Sure I had Toothless behind me and that since I was seriously injured, he wouldn't dare hurt me...except after what he saw me do to his daughter, all those bets are off the table.

He still stood there, his face unreadable. Usually he was an approachable man, and would always try to portray himself as that, but now him standing in front of me, with the events in the past week fresh on our minds, was the last thing I wanted. His stance was that of intimidation and warning, and I was trying not to hide behind Toothless, to hide away and not face him. However when I turned around I saw Toothless walking in a general direction away from us. Curse that dragon.

"May we talk" he emphasized it more of a statement as a question and walked past me to face the glittering lake. I turned around, and he had his back to me, and I'm not sure if that scared me even more...because normally when he had a conversation with someone he maintained eye contact. Now it seemed he didn't even want to look at me.

"How are your wounds?" he asked, a hint of caring in it.

"T-They're...healing" I answered softly, glancing at the ground then back at him to see if he turned around. "Thanks to your daughter" I added quickly. I shouldn't have said that because he turned his head towards me a bit, so that his left eye could see me. I flinched back a bit, because a mad Hofferson was something no one liked, especially if that Hofferson was the father of the girl you humiliated.

"You had her extremely worried, Hiccup. She said she wouldn't leave your side until you woke up. I tried to tell her that she needs to stay active instead of staying inside all day, but she was adamant about it. I guess she gets her stubbornness from her mother" he said, and I could almost imagine him smiling when he said that.

"You know...it's amazing the affects you have on my daughter. The way you bring out her 'girl' side, if you can call it that, and the way you can completely break her if you want to" he said turning to face me now, and I saw the hurt and anger in his eyes and I have never seen him look at me like that before.

"Sir, you do not understand how sorry I am for what I did to her...for driving her to commit suicide, for breaking her heart, for humiliating her" I said.

"Your apologies mean nothing to me, Hiccup. That being said I'm not the person you should be apologizing to" he said turning his back towards me again.

"I can't face your daughter sir...not after what I said. She deserves better than me, a man who will not snap at her, a man who will treat her better than I did and a man who will not cause her pain whatsoever"

"She does deserve that kind of man...but the only one who comes close enough is you" he said looking at me. I didn't take this as a sign of him forgiving me since no father will ever be able to forgive a man who hurt his daughter like that.

"Look Hiccup, when you were younger, before the whole Red Death, I had hopes for you...sure you couldn't wield an axe or sword like now, but you had promise, and I knew you always had eyes on my daughter...not the kind your cousin does, but in a different way. When you all started Dragon Training, she used to come every night and wonder why you were even there, saying that you could get hurt and didn't belong there. I know that might sound harsh but that was her way of showing she cared about you. She was worried that you wouldn't make it out alive after a lesson, and even though she said it without any compassion, both her mother and I knew she cared. So when you said those remarks at her about marrying you out of money and not love...that tore a deep hole in her heart Hiccup, not to mention it affected me as well" he said walking up to me.

"I know the Hoffersons aren't a wealthy tribe in the village. We only have our fighting skills to go on and our honour. And do you realize that you and Astrid are probably the luckiest people this generation?" he asked, his voice raising.

"You both love each other, and you could have easily married based on that. Ingrid and I married because it was arranged. Your father and your mother's marriage was also arranged, except they grew to like each other after the engagement, and so did Ingrid and I. You and Astrid have everything that most of us dreamed of! So don't go around yelling that she's marrying you for money!" he yelled, our faces just two inches apart.

I have never seen him lose his temper like that, not in the years I remember, or not at me anyway. I definitely crossed a line when hurting his daughter.

"Don't you have anything to say?" he asked.

"I have nothing to say sir" looking at the ground. "I don't know if I should talk to her...I'm not afraid that she'll use violence, I'm afraid of looking her in the eye after all that's happened. I'm afraid I'll see the hurt I caused her. I'm afraid that I've changed her view of me...and I'm afraid if she'll never want to talk to me, or even look at me for that matter. All I know is I shouldn't have channeled all my anger at her, and throwing the ring was...not stupid, or crazy...but downright cruel and unforgivable, and something that no person should ever go through...unfortunately I did that to your daughter...the person I love and I think the only person who cared deeply for me. I am right in saying I don't deserve her" I said, a tear running down my cheek.

His facial expression seemed to have calmed down after I said that to him, but he turned his back to me again and walked to the edge of the lake.

"Be that as it may Hiccup, but know this...I will never look at you the same way after this. I will forgive you in due time, but know that I will not forget that event" he said and turned back to his cave where I believe his family was.

I watched him walk off and reflected upon what he said. There was no going back on this now. I have left a new image in his mind of myself and it wasn't a good one. It was one that could wipe out all the good things I've done because it was so personal to him.

I felt a push on my leg, and saw that Toothless had returned. "Oh, now you come back" I said as he sat down next to me. He growled something that went along the lines of 'That was something you needed to do on your own' and in some way I was thankful for that. In some way, it was good to talk to Aaron, otherwise I would have been trying avoid him for the rest of my life.

"Come on bud, let's go back" I said and turned around to head back to my cave but I stopped in my tracks.

Right there in front of me, about twenty feet away and staring back at me was Stormfly and Astrid.

I had the same facial expression as her, one of shock and uncertainty. We stood still like that...I don't know how long, but it seemed like an hour at least. We didn't dare move a muscle. We just stood there staring at each other, not knowing what to say or even if we should say anything.

"T-thank you...f-for taking c-care of m-me" I said quickly before walking back to my cave, not wanting to make eye contact, because I was afraid to see the hurt again. And from what I saw just now, it seemed like she was afraid of me, and I didn't want to see that. I didn't want to see what I did to her. I hope she understands what that thank you meant...for taking care of me. I couldn't say I was sorry because 'sorry' couldn't make up for it. I had to find a way to show her I was sorry, but talking to her had to wait.

Astrid's POV

I had just returned from a flight around the island with Stormfly. She had been cooped up here, and I wasn't giving her any attention because I was too busy remaining at Hiccup's side. What I saw him go through just to save me from a possibly miserable life and the village, it was just too much, to see him nearly be killed.

In some way, Drago was right...his loyalty and honour displayed no bounds for the people that were thought to be his friends...but we are! I myself wondered how Drago had got into his head and twist what he already knew into something much worse. When I look into it more deeply, I see that Drago and Hiccup aren't that different...even though I can't believe I'm comparing Hiccup to him.

Their similarity is that they use their heads in battle. Drago works on getting himself into your head, and messing with your mind. Until then, I always thought Hiccup as the person who couldn't be so easily swayed when it came to a battle of the minds. But Drago went one step further. He had been studying Hiccup, trying to pick out weaknesses and exploit them, and he clearly did find them and went all the way of bombarding them with his lies, which at the same time weren't lies.

I don't know what Drago said to Hiccup while he was in Gothi's sick bay, and part of me doesn't want to know. But when the time is right, he will tell someone.

When I came back and returning to my cave, I saw my dad talking with Hiccup in front of the lake. I knew from the moment I saw them and their stance, especially my father's, that it was regarding his outburst at me in the village just over three weeks ago. I stayed in the shadows, waiting and listening in on their conversation as best I could.

However, from everything I heard, Hiccup was on the receiving end of it all. I knew my father was protective and I knew he was going to talk to Hiccup once he woke up, but I didn't imagine it going like it did. My father only saw Hiccup as the villain in this case. How blind he was to not see me as one.

Hiccup had the right to yell at me, to say I didn't help him when he most needed it. And even when I looked deeper into what he said, I realized I had just taken Hiccup's forgiveness for granted, acting as if what happened in the past didn't even happen at all.

Hiccup was right.

We all just took his forgiveness for granted and never truly showed him how sorry we were. It took him nearly dying for everyone to realize their mistakes...and for me to realize my feelings. Drago was

right about Berk, he was right about Hiccup...if it wasn't for his conscience or his morals, Hiccup would have joined Drago in a heartbeat and not cared for Berk anymore.

And here he was, just a few minutes ago, accepting the responsibility for what he had done and blaming himself for it all. What my father and him fail to realize was that he had the right to do that, just as the rest of us had the right to ignore and treat him like an outcast for most of his young life, and pretend it never happened once he saved the village.

All of a sudden he turned around and we locked eyes and not moving. I didn't know what to say to him because I wasn't sure if he was sad or angry or confused. Or if I was afraid I wouldn't be able to comfort him. I saw the bandages wrapped around his abdomen and chest, his right forearm completely bandaged as well, and he was holding the left side of his chest, where the three cracked ribs were.

I didn't know what to do in that moment, and for the first time, I realized that this is what Hiccup must have felt like when he was at the centre of the village being publicly questioned and humiliated for his actions that put the the entire village at risk, when he was only trying to help.

"T-thank you...f-for taking c-care of m-me" he said quickly and turned towards his cave and quickly hobbled back in with Toothless for support. I guess his mom must have told him what I did. It was the least I could do after what he had gone through back at Berk. But what I didn't like was the fear in his eyes when he said that. It almost seemed as if he was struggling to look at me, but forcing himself to at the same time.

He must still be weary of me and doesn't trust me. I looked on as he saw him fall and grunt from the pain. I winced in reaction. I wanted to run to his side and help him back so bad...but I couldn't move. I wouldn't know what to say to him, he wouldn't even want me to touch him at all, not after what I've done to him.

Stormfly nudged my shoulder, clearly worried about me. Only then I realized that I had been standing in that spot for over twenty minutes, and Hiccup was long gone. "I wish I could say I was fine Stormfly" I said as I rubbed her chin and looked in Hiccup's direction.

"Back from your stroll I see" I heard a voice that grew familiar over the time spent here. I saw Hiccup's mother walk down another path and stood by me gazing out onto the lake.

"Yes, it was nice to explore more of this place" I said looking around.

"But it looks like you have more questions that peace on your mind" she said, looking at me.

"It's just that...Hiccup deserved to say what he said to me, about me and the village...the ring was a bit too far but everything else wasn't. And I just saw him get a death warning from my dad for him saying the truth about me."

"Are you mad at Hiccup for saying those things about

you?"

"Honestly, I don't know what I'm feeling. I don't know if I should be sad, guilty, mad...if I was mad I would want cut his head..." I didn't finish that sentence because any violence related thought of Hiccup brings images of him getting stabbed. "But you get the point. I don't know why people are so mad at him just for saying the truth" I said.

"Well from what I saw, it was just your father who seemed mad and unjust in pressing all the blame at Hiccup...but since his daughter was heartbroken and drove to commit suicide, I can't really blame him. I think he wanted to talk to Hiccup as a person of advice, but ended up talking as a hurt father" she said.

"I mean I didn't help him all those years. When I started hanging out with the others, he started to leave my mind, and I began to spend less time with him...I started pushing him away, doing what any real Viking would do...pushing away the weak" I said softly, holding both my arms. "I failed to realize that he was the strongest out of all of us."

"Hiccup was different from the moment he was born. His father, the healer and I all knew it. Even when we carried him through the village, the people were worried that he was weak and wouldn't make it through his first winter. I think it was that determination to protect him, to not lose him, to prove them wrong, that I gave Hiccup my utmost attention during his infant years. I also think he inherited his determination from me...the only good thing from his father is I think his stubbornness" she said with a slight smirk, to which I laughed a bit.

"But as you said, he's proven many people wrong, and I know for a fact that Vikings have a hard time apologizing, but due to Hiccup's kind nature, it seemed to them that he had forgiven them...but maybe he had been hiding his true feelings until recently" she said.

"What do you mean?"

"Drago managed to get through to him because he understood what Hiccup had gone through, so he knew what to exploit. That's also why Hiccup trusted Drago, because at that moment he finally knew that there was someone out there _like _him, and being the trustworthy person he is, he took Drago's word for it...which was understandable and true" she explained. "Plus I think he was angry at the prank Snotlout and the Twins pulled on him because it nearly killed him."

"So what do I do to help...if I can help at all?"

"I'm not sure, Astrid. But I do know you can't help now. He will want to avoid you and the others for sometime, and I suggest you give him his space. He's not only coming to terms with what he did, but he's also at a crucial stage in his maturation, as are the rest of you. I suggest you head back now to your friends and get some rest, it's been a long night. I will stay with Hiccup and make sure nothing goes wrong" she said walking in Hiccup's direction.

"Ma'am?" I called and she turned around. "If anything does happen, could you please let me know?" I ask.

"You'll be the first" she smiled and disappeared into the cave. A small smile crept on my face as I returned to the cave that we were staying in.

"This is my bed!" "No, it's mine, Ugh!" I heard the Twins fighting.

"You do know there are two beds here right?" Fishlegs asked.

"Yeah, but she stole the comfy one, and I want it back!" Tuff yelled, as he was face planted onto the ground.

"What do you mean I stole it? Hiccup's mom gave it to me and you sat your gross butt on it!" she yelled back.

"It doesn't matter if it's comfy or not! They're both the same beds!" Snotlout said from his bed next to Hookfang. "Oh hey Astrid, how was your flight?" he asked, and the others stopped whatever they were doing and focused on me walking in with Stormfly.

"Cold" I replied walking past him.

"Told you should have had me to keep you warm for that flight" he chuckled, but I couldn't care less of what he said and made my way to my corner.

"Do you know how's Hiccup doing?" Fishlegs asked, from Meatlug's side.

"I just saw him talking with my dad" I replied.

"Uh oh. That couldn't have been good for him" Ruff said as she sat on her brother.

"I think my dad blames him for what happened after he ran" I said quietly.

"Well he has every right to...I mean he made _the_ Astrid Hofferson cry in front of the entire village, and drove her to commit suicide, I mean what kind of father wouldn't be mad at that guy?" Tuff stated.

"But we all know who's fault that was?" Fish said and glared at Snotlout.

"What? It's my fault that he couldn't let it slide, I mean I've pulled pranks on him so many times before this one" he said, crossing his arms and looking away.

"Did those pranks involve burning half of his face?" I asked in a dangerously low tone. I saw his scowl soften a bit, noting that he did feel bad about that. "No it didn't. They just involved hurting him, humiliating him, punishing him and making feel useless for over ten years of his life. That's what they were for huh Snotlout?" I asked, staring at the fire.

"Didn't you ever think that would leave a mark on him?" I asked.

"It doesn't matter now! What happened is in the past...he's forgiven

us for what we've done to him" he said.

"Clearly you don't realize the full extent of Hiccup's outburst at Berk" Fishlegs said.

"Oh no, that what don't I understand Legs?" he asked.

"You didn't understand that you took advantage of Hiccup's forgiving nature. You didn't realize that his anger was building up with each prank and comment you pulled. You didn't understand the way he felt and continued to make him feel useless until he almost died fighting the Red Death" I said.

"Well neither did you! You never stood up for him, you just sat on the sidelines and watched everything, not batting an eye at what I did to him, and you did that for nearly ten years!" he shot back.

"I know...and I regret every moment where I didn't do anything to make his life easier" I said sadly and laid against Stormfly. That's when we heard more footsteps coming in and saw Heather with Ripper, walking in with Razorcut behind them.

"Can we see Hiccup?" I asked all of a sudden. I really did want to see him again, just to know he was alright, even though I saw him less twenty minutes ago.

"He doesn't want to see any of you" he blatantly stated as Razorcut curled up in a corner, and Heather and Ripper sitting near him, where two beds were.

"Who can blame him?" I said looking at the ground.

"Truth be told, I don't even want to be here with you all" he said.

"Then why are you...we don't want you here just as much" Snotlout shot back, but it was a failed attempt.

"Because this was the only other cave on the island big enough for Razorcut to stay and the only one where there was a tolerable company" he said, taking out some fish and placing them on a spit for the fire.

"Don't you want to be by Hiccup's side?" Tuff asked.

"Believe me he does. But his mother said no one but her, and I convinced him to stay here" Heather said, glancing at Ripper.

"Honestly, what was going through your head to play that prank on him?" he asked, looking at Snotlout.

"I just thought Hiccup would receive the shock of his life. The forge blowing up and Hiccup getting burned wasn't supposed to happen" Snotlout defended his actions.

"Yeah...and look where that's got us" Fishlegs remarked.

"You know it amazes me" Ripper said all of a sudden.

"What does?" I asked.

"Hiccup's ability to forgive so easily and all of you to take that for granted" he said.

"And what do you know about it?" Ruff asked.

"I lived with him, fought by his side and trained him for two years. We traveled to many lands together and we became as close as brothers. I began to find out who he really was" he said sadly.

"You say it like it's a bad thing" I said. Surely Hiccup didn't have any bad secrets about himself.

"It is...because that's when I learned about his character and what all of you did to him in the past" he said. All of us turned to him, intent on listening. "People were impressed that he did tame a Night Fury and he was the one who defeated the Red Death...but when it came to fighting skills, they all saw him as useless. The very people he trained with always picked on him and said without his dragon he was completely useless. Of course he shot back with a witty, sarcastic comment, but at the end of the day, he would leave the city walls and walk about in the forest."

"One day I followed him, and saw him sitting on a rock next to a tree which had sword cuts on it and a few hard punch marks as well. I got within a safe distance and I could hear Hiccup crying. He was saying things like how the others were true, that he was always useless and didn't deserve to be here, and I heard him say that it was just like how Berk treated him before everything happened. The only difference now was that he was trying to become his own man, and once again there were people hindering him from doing so. That's when I decided to lead his training. He asked me why I would do that since he'd miss learning from the best soldiers in Atlatka, but I told him training involves hard work, discipline, respect and the right push by a mentor. When he was training with them, he didn't have the push or the respect. We made camp outside the city and trained there, away from the people who would try to put him down again. But it's also in the woods that I realized the nightmares he suffers from."

"He dreams of being back in Berk, a situation where Toothless never happened, and where he was seen as a constant let down. He told me he was afraid. And in all that time, I didn't notice he was carrying this burden on him. Sure he was confident and stubborn and strong-willed, but he was also fragile. What happened in his past had never been forgotten by him. He always held them close to his mind because he told me that it reminds him of how far he's come. But what he failed to see was what the effect of keeping those horrible memories close would do to him."

All of us looked at each other and then to the ground, not believing what we were hearing. It brought tears to my eyes that even after all that we had been through; Alvin, Dagur, the Screaming Death and many other fights, that not one of us stopped to think about how he really was.

"He was really good at hiding his feelings...he had been doing it for so long, that's why none of us noticed" he said.

"What Drago said to him, the things that convinced him to turn on

us...I'm afraid he might have overheard it in our conversation one night, and we didn't even know he was there" Ripper said.

"You mean, just like how he controlled the dragon to kill Hiccup?" Fish asked, and Ripper nodded in response.

"He decided to come out and tell me his feelings, all of them; of how abandoned he felt when he was young to your feelings for him" he said looking at me. "He told me he wondered how could a girl like you even fall for a guy like him. He wasn't strong, not built nor had any trait that a Viking girl looks for in a man, but you like him. He wondered if there was something up but I told him he was stupid for thinking it. I told him you saw him for him, and nothing was going to change that. Drago must have overheard that and came up with the claim that you just loved him for money and his success" he said.

"Overtime his nightmares began to disappear as he became more confident, but I knew he never forgot, and as a result, those memories, combined with the prank and what Drago said, just set him off. For that brief moment, his anger convinced him that he let himself be taken advantage of in the village. That you all only started treating him nicely for your own benefits" he finished.

"What about now? Does he still hold those memories close to him?" Fish asked.

"I don't know. All I do know is that he blames himself for everything" he said.

"That's just like Hiccup, taking the blame and not pointing it at anyone else" I said with a small smile at his good quality. "When can I actually see him?" I asked.

"He's not in the mood to see anyone Astrid, save for me and his mom. You're the last person he'll want to see, for completely different reasons" he said, and I nodded.

"If it makes any difference, I did apologize to him for the prank" Snotlout said, for once looking guilty for what he had done.

"It won't make the slightest difference with him now" Ripper said.

"So all we can do is wait and pray that he will speak to us?" I asked.

"Maybe admitting your mistakes directly to him and apologizing for everything is a start, but not sure about the rest" he said.

I nodded and looked back to the fire, with a few fish cooking on a spit above it. I had to make it up to Hiccup, but how could I if he won't even look at me? I don't know how long I can go without talking to him. Those two years were nothing because I knew he was coming back, but now I don't know if he was coming back to me.

****A/N: Well guys, this is the chapter you guys have been waiting for...so enjoy!****

Ripper's POV

"He's starting to like you" I said as I walked into the cave after collecting some water to see Heather rubbing Razorcut's chin.

"Yeah, he's not so bad when you get to know him" she said, stopping the petting to which Razorcut was semi-disappointed. "Ripper, it's been a week and they still have showed no signs of talking to each other" she said with a sigh.

"Well they did need their space from each other to collect their thoughts" I said in their defense.

"But I didn't think it would take this long. I mean this rate, they'll never talk to each other."

"Well I've been talking to Hiccup and he's still working on how to apologize Astrid. He did say he's making progress but he didn't say how much" I said sitting down next to her.

"I've been talking to Astrid and she's made some progress in getting over that incident, but she's also trying to figure out how to apologize to Hiccup, along with everyone else. By the way where is everyone else?"

"They're all together somewhere working on how to apologize to Hiccup. I think they're also involving the dragons in their apology" I replied. "But I do know Astrid has just taken a break from it and is near the lake if you're wondering" I finished.

"Well if they're involving dragons in the apology they must be really going all out on it" she said with a small laugh.

"It is their only choice if they want to show him how sorry they really are and it seems like the best idea. The only problem is getting Hiccup to see it" I said. With that in thought, how will Hiccup get Astrid alone to apologize? He had been planning it for a week and that was the only obstacle...and working up the courage to confront her.

"Will he want to see it?"

"He doesn't know about it, and the others don't know about his apology either."

"Well, this is bound to get awkward if they try and apologize on the same day."

"That is one thing that Hiccup will have no problem with" I said with a laugh. She also laughed along with me for a bit. I looked outside to see the sun setting. It had been twenty two days since we left Berk in Drago's hands and we've heard nothing from them. The others and I have conducted routine patrols and have not encountered any of his men, expecting that they would try and search for us. But I guess that wouldn't be a good military tactic since you don't want to waste your resources going after a group that you have no idea where they

are.

On the other hand, his men could be out there searching for us since he knows we're a threat to him and he wouldn't us interfering with his plans again. I hope Stoick and the people left behind on Berk are doing alright. With a man like Drago left in charge, who knows if he lost his mind and took his anger out on them. What am I thinking? I shouldn't be thinking like that.

"You know Ripper, you're remarkable" Heather said, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"I'm sorry, what?" I asked, a smile creeping on my face. She turned to me and smiled.

"You heard me...you're remarkable. When I look at you, you've seem to taken up a big brother role when it comes to Hiccup, and you always look out for him" she said.

"Well, even when we were younger, I did talk and play with him every now and then. He always enjoyed those days, but as I grew, my training began to control my life and I had no time to hang out with him or my other friends. But I made sure to say hi whenever I could. I was also more than happy to help train and travel with him for those two years. Allowed us to grow close and strengthen our bond" I said.

"It's just that, I've never to hardly seen guys like you."

"Well I hardly see girls like you" I replied, and we were caught in a stare, and that's when I realized how beautiful her eyes were...those ruby green eyes, soft lips, and perfect facial structure...

"Get a room you two" we heard a voice and turned to see Astrid walking in with a slight smirk. That's when we realized we were caught in a stare and turned away from each other blushing like mad.

"So how's the training going?" I asked, trying to cool down my cheeks.

" (sigh) We're getting there. Have you heard from Hiccup?" she asked.

"Yeah, don't worry, he's recovering well. It still hurts a little when he breathes and if he does anything strenuous but it's getting better as the days go by" I replied.

"Do you think he'll be alright by the time the apology is ready?" I could sense the anxiety in her voice. She really wanted him to see it. What she didn't know was that she had to prepare herself for Hiccup's apology.

"Well, I can drag him out if you want me to" I said with a small smile. That's when I saw her frown a bit. "Hey you know I was just kidding right?"

"Y-Yeah...I know, it's just I hope he understands and sees how sorry we are, after doing so much to him. You know, in these past few weeks, I've seen how selfish we've been towards him and he's kept it

quiet because he was used to it...and it just hurts me that I never saw it" she said, leaning against the soft wall of the cave, and letting herself fall to the floor, holding her elbows.

"I guess you have to learn to show him that his efforts are recognized more than it usually is, and encourage him to speak his mind. I think that should help" Heather said and I nodded in agreement.

"But we always made sure we did...I mean when he drove the Speed Stingers away from Berk, when he cleared my family's name of the Flightmare, when he saved me from Dagur, when he saved the village countless times from the Outcasts, the list goes on and on" she said, obviously wondering where they went wrong.

"Maybe it's how you showed him that you were thankful. Maybe you were thankful but just never said anything assuming he knew that you were thankful. In a weird way...he wanted to hear he did a good job, and from what I've seen, you guys act like it's his responsibility to do all that...and he does it, but you've never _really_ given him the credit he felt he should have got" I said.

"That...makes a lot of sense" she said after a few minutes thinking it over.

"I think he figured you all were grateful, but he also wanted to hear it...I guess that's the part you guys forgot" I said, trying not to apply more guilt onto her. She still looked depressed about the whole thing, and then I felt a nudge in my chest. I looked over to see Heather moving her eyes, signalling me to leave. I guess she wanted to talk to Astrid alone and saw I wasn't really doing a good job.

"Well I'm going to go for a walk now" I said getting up with Razorcut following me out. I guess I could go see Hiccup and see how he was coming along.

_Astrid's POV _

I didn't pay attention to Ripper walking out as I was too busy thinking about how many times I never showed Hiccup I was grateful, and that list was growing. The time where he proved my uncle was never scared of the Flightmare, I never said thank you for that...I assumed he knew it. Even the time where he came for me when I was kidnapped. I was expecting him to come, and sure I did give him a kiss, but I think that was the only real situation where I actually expressed my gratitude for his actions. Then there was when the Outcasts attacked and he was severely injured. He was the main target and no one actually took time off their schedule to make sure he was ok.

"Keep dwelling on it and it'll eat you out, Astrid" Heather said, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"I know, it's just...I won't be able to stop thinking about what he said."

"Nobody will. It's something that will stick with you until the day you die. But you're not the only one going through this, everyone else is as well. Even Hiccup" she said.

"Why would he be going through emotional dilemmas like us...we're the ones who are thinking of what he said."

"But then you would know due to Hiccup's kind nature, he's blaming himself for shouting at you and I quote "ending" his love for you. He knows he took it too far and he's probably feeling just as bad."

"Like I said before...it's just like him. I don't why he gets so angry at himself for speaking the truth about the rest of us...I mean he's just so...Hiccup" I said.

"And that's why you love him?" she asked.

"That and so much more, Heather...I just want to show him that he is appreciated, if not by the others, then by me" I said, finally meeting her gaze.

"I'm sure he'll love what you guys are planning...and I'll tell you in advance when Ripper decides to bring him out" she said. I smiled in return. Heather could really be a great friend.

"By the way, what was that moment in here you were having with Ripper?" I asked, giving her an all knowing smirk, and saw her blush.

"T-that? That was...nothing, just a friendly chat" she attempted to cover it up.

"Looked more than a friendly chat from where I was standing, the way you two looked into each other's eyes. I could literally see your faces closing in for a kiss" I said, trying to hold in my laughter.

"We weren't! I was just telling him what good qualities he has!" she defended.

"You like him don't you?" I asked.

"What? No...no, I don't like him...did he say he likes me?" she asked and I raised one of my brows. "Fine! I like him ok? There I said it" she said, huffing and crossing her arms.

"Feels good to get it out of you doesn't it?" I asked.

" (sigh) It actually does. Thanks" she said and I smiled in return.

"So when did you start developing feelings for the Whispering Death trainer?" I asked, leaning a bit forward.

"I actually don't know...I guess it just sort of happened" she said.

"Come on, there has to be more than that?"

"Maybe there is Astrid...but I can't tell you now since it's still relatively new to me."

"Astrid!" I turned and saw Ruff running in. "It's ready" she said before running back out. I turned over to Heather.

"I hope this works" I said before getting up.

"I'll tell Hiccup in five minutes" she said. I nodded and followed Ruff's trail back to where everyone was.

_Hiccup's POV _

"So, have you figured out what you're going to do?" Ripper asked as he stood leaning against the wall of the cave.

"Yeah...take her to that secluded cave with the waterfall and mini-lake and apologize there" I said, laying down on my covers.

"That's it? I thought you were planning bigger than that" he said, pulling out his sword and inspecting it since it looked like he was bored as Hel.

"There's nothing here for me to work with Ripper...I can't give her the ring since technically we're still in a war and I'm reserving that moment for after, and I'm restricted to the cave and some other parts of the island right now because of my wounds, which are healing fine by the way" I said, throwing the ring box in the air and catching it...equally bored as well.

"You know that's if she forgives you" he said.

"Did you come here to try and make me feel bad or what?" I asked, not wanting to think about that.

" (chuckle) You know me Hiccup, I would never pass up that opportunity for all the gold in the Archipelagos" he said, and I also couldn't help but chuckle at his humour. "That's the first time I've heard you laugh in a while" he said.

"I guess my mind is not occupied with anything right now...except playing the scenes of how my encounter with Astrid will go" I said looking away.

"Again with that pessimistic attitude...you really have to look at the bright side of things and imagine yourself succeeding in apologizing to her" he tried to encourage.

"Maybe you're right."

"I'm always right" he said with a laugh.

"Don't get cocky Ripper...that's been your one weakness" I said with a smile.

"I embrace my weaknesses, makes me a stronger man than I am today...wait that came out wrong" he said and I laughed in amusement. That's when we heard Heather come in.

"There you two are, Hiccup you've got to come see this" she said pulling me up carefully.

"See what?" I asked.

"Trust me Hiccup, you'll want to follow her" Ripper said walking out, and I had no choice but to follow them. As soon as we exited the cave, I couldn't see anything that had Heather and Ripper so excited.

"What am I supposed to be seeing?" I asked them, but saw that they were looking at the sky.

"That" they both answered at the same time. When I looked up, I couldn't believe my eyes. I saw Astrid, the Twins, Fishlegs and Snotlout come in from different directions on their dragons and let go bags of flowers right above us, while doing a few twirls and dives to add to the display, and when I looked to my right, I saw a formation of the different dragons...with a few riders on them...Gustav leading on Fanghook, and they seemed to spell out something. When they were right in front, I swear I shed a tear at that moment.

The dragons flew in a formation that said 'WE'RE SORRY', and soon after, my friends landed in front of us.

"Hiccup..." Fishlegs started, "...I know we never really spoke or hung out when we were younger, even though we were the closest ones alike, but after you showed me who dragons really were...I would never have the most awesome dragon a boy could have" he said hugging Meatlug who licked him back, and I couldn't help but smile at the site. "I would never have met her, but also I wouldn't have all the knowledge about dragons if it wasn't for you. I would still be limited to the knowledge of the Book of Dragons, and would have never been able to make my own version. You made me the man I am today Hiccup...you take my ideas into account, you say you could never do anything without me...but the truth is Hiccup, it's thanks to you I have a purpose...it's thanks to you, my friend, that I'm where I am today" he said with a smile.

"Hiccup..." Ruff started, "...I know me and my brother, mainly my brother, have been behind years of teasing and pranks and other stuff, and I know you'll never forget them..." "neither will we" Tuff said with a laugh but got elbowed in the stomach by his sister. "I mean that in a 'look back upon' way" he said holding his stomach.

"What me and my idiot brother are trying to say is that we're sorry Hiccup...for everything, including helping in that forge prank" she said and gestured to the burnt mark on my face.

"Plus, you actually see the potential in us, Hiccup" Tuff said. "We can't blame you if you have your doubts in us, heck I've doubted myself many times, and I mean _way _many times, but you do take some of our ideas into account, even though I have no idea when I say them, and you give us credit for it, like when I trained Torch, or when we stole the Skrill from Dagur...you give us the credit that many others don't really give us. Thank you" he said with a bow of his head.

" (cough)" I turned to Snotlout. "I guess I've never been fair to you cuz'. I don't why I bullied you, made fun of you or tormented you; maybe I was really stupid..."

"You still are" Fishlegs added in.

"Much more stupid" Ruff said.

"Way, way more..." Tuff said but was interrupted.

"Do you guys mind!? I'm trying to apologize here!" he yelled at them.

"Well that's a first" Fish remarked with a laugh, and the others laughed as well, and I couldn't help a small chuckle escape my lips.

"Anyway...as I was saying, maybe it's because I was dumb and reckless and stupid and I didn't think you deserved to be chief. I was...wrong" he said that last part quietly. "I never gave you the credit you deserved even after your defeat of the Red Death. Maybe I was jealous that you would steal my spotlight, that I would take a backseat to you...and in my mind I couldn't allow that. I was even jealous that Astrid had her eyes on you, and...well, I was jealous of everything you had Hiccup, and everything you did" he said, and I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

"I'm sorry about the prank Hiccup, really I am...and the hundreds of others that I did to you before. I haven't been the good cousin I should have been, but if you give me time...and _a lot _of patience, I will try and change" he said, and he stepped back to the others. The only one left was...

"Hiccup..." Astrid started. "I actually don't know where to start" she was holding her elbows and looking at the ground. "We had been close when we were young. We used to hang out with each other. But when I started hanging out with the others, I started pushing you away, leaving you behind...and I began to take up that whole view the village had towards you at that time...Gods I was such an idiot" she said shaking her head and holding herself tighter.

"I wanted to help you so bad, I wanted to talk to you...but I was afraid of what people would think of me...they always said you were weak and useless, but after the Red Death, I realized I was the weak one...for not taking a stand and defending you when you needed it most. I did care for you Hiccup, even though I didn't show it, I did care for you. When we joined Dragon Training, I did those things because I wanted you to improve. I know it seemed what I did was harsh and uncalled for...but back then I didn't know how to express my feelings..." I saw a few tears brimming her eyes.

"When you showed me Toothless, I began to see the _real _you...the Hiccup I secretly hoped you'd become, and when we couldn't find you after you killed the Red Death...I had so many regrets going through my head...not getting to know you better, not talking to you, not being able to tell you that I love you" she sniffed, holding back the few tears. "And after that, the adventures we had, you always knew what to do, clearing my family's honour of the Flightmare, even helping me get along with Snotlout with Option number 3...you always knew what to do...and I've realized that I never truly expressed my thanks and gratitude each time you helped the village...which was almost every single time, even when you helped me when I was in trouble."

"I'm sorry Hiccup...I'm truly sorry for the things I didn't do, and I hope you can find it in your heart to see the new me...the new me that will make sure to recognize your acts and be there for you when you truly need it!" she said, and I saw a tear fall down her cheek. I couldn't believe what I just heard and saw. All my friends apologized and they meant it...every single word.

Without thinking I started walking to Astrid. She had her face buried in her chest, so she didn't see me walk up to her. She only did look up when she felt someone's presence over her, and before she could do anything, I enveloped her into a hug, and she hugged me tightly back.

"I forgive you" I whispered to her, and I meant it...for everything she did, I forgive her.

"Thank you Hiccup...thank you" she mumbled into my chest, still not letting me go. We let go after a good two minutes. We had been apart for nearly a month, and we didn't realize how much we missed each other. I thought she didn't want to talk to me, let alone see me, but all along she had been wanting to apologize to me...they all wanted to.

"I forgive all of you" I said to the others, who smile at me.

"Does this mean we're cool?" Snotlout asked raising out his hand.

"We are" I said grasping his hand at the shoulder, and he did mine, and we shook.

"You know Hiccup, even though that burn is healing, and will be gone...you look like a marauder with that burn...that's awesome!" Tuff yelled, and I laughed a bit. But then I remembered my apology.

"Astrid, I need to tell you something" I said turning to her.

"What is it?"

"Not here, please follow me" I said, holding out my hand, waiting for her. She gladly accepted and we said our goodbyes to the others who went back to their cave, while I took Astrid to that secret spot on the island, followed by Toothless and Stormfly.

"So how long did it take you to train those dragons to do that?" I asked after a few minutes of walking in silence. I was truly interested in how she did it.

"It took a week...and a lot of fish to train them. I learned from the best after all" she said with a slight smile looking in my direction. We soon entered the cave that opened up a bit to an enclosed mini-lake and a small waterfall. The stream that fed the waterfall I believe led to the large lake in the other direction. There was a small hole in the top which allowed the moonlight to enter and bask the area in a sort of glow. This would be the perfect place to say it.

"This place is beautiful. How come I've never seen it?" she asked as

she looked around.

"My mom kept this area off limits to you all. It's sort of her place to relax. I told her I was going to bring you here and she allowed it" I said, facing her.

"Why bring me here?" she asks, truly curious. I guess I should start now.

"To say I'm sorry for the things I said to you, Astrid" I said with a serious/sorry face. She tilted her head a bit, in I believe annoyance.

"Hiccup, you don't have to apologize for anything. You were right about what you said about me and..." but I cut her off.

"No I wasn't!" I said a bit too loudly and she stopped. I started walking towards her, "I said that you loved me only because you and your family were going to be set for life if you married me...I questioned your love for me, even when you did show it, when we were in the forge and Ripper interrupted us, when we were on that survival trip with our friends...you made it evident to me that you loved me for me. And I let my anger cloud my judgement" I said, stopping right in front of her. She tilted her head up and I looked down into her eyes.

"I let my anger control me. I had anger which many you say I deserved, but what I didn't deserve was to direct it all at you...the person who cared for me the most after Toothless. I was weak in letting my emotions get the better of me when it came to you...I was weak for letting Drago into my head" I said, as I felt a tear run down my cheek. I then felt a soft, warm hand cup my cheek and felt a thumb rub away the tear. I opened my eyes to see her staring lovingly into my eyes.

"You are not weak Hiccup...Drago exploited your emotions...no decent person with a conscience would ever do that." I couldn't believe she was trying to justify my actions towards her.

"No Astrid. I accept my weaknesses, but it was too late when I had already dealt the damage to you. Throwing the ring at you was...not even stupid, but cruel and unjust. I went too far. I let my anger control me and let it hurt you...which was the last thing I ever wanted Astrid. But now I know that that event, will always hold a place in our memories...a memory that I wish I could forget, or not even made" I said as I held her hand.

"It opened my eyes Hiccup" she said, and I stared at her, not knowing what she meant. "It allowed me to see the errors of my treatment of you, ever since we were young until now. It showed me how much we took you for granted, and it will remind me never to make that mistake again" she said.

"But how can you forgive me after all that, when I drove you to attempted suicide? How can you forgive me like that?! No person would ever do that."

"Because you do it all the time...forgiving people. You always try to see the best in them and you do. You could have easily run away when I found you and Toothless, but no, you came back to show me what

dragons really are because you saw the good in me and decided to trust me...it's my turn to forgive Hiccup...and I forgive you" she said.

Words or actions couldn't describe how happy I felt at that moment. She closed the gap between us by pressing her body against mine, and I hugged her around her waist while she had the palms of her hands against my chest. We looked at each other and gazed into each other's eyes, and we both saw the longing in each other's eyes for the other. We had been apart for two years, but this one month had been filled with more uncertainty of seeing or talking to each other, and now we were passed that.

She leaned in and so did I and our lips met. It had been a long time since I kissed her lips. That sweet, soft strawberry taste of her lips, and the highly distinct aurora that surrounded her. We pulled apart after a minute or two...but that kiss was different. It wasn't a full make-out kiss that we shared many times, but it still had the same passion...but more in-depth. When we looked into each other's eyes, we saw more than passion...we saw lust.

A/N: I guess this is where it might get T/M to an M. Not sure. But just had to warn some of you.

Our lips met once more, but with much more force, as if they had been starved for years and this was their only food after that time. Her hands made their way from my chest to the my hair, and began to tangle themselves in the braids she had made for me. I left my left hand at her waist and let my right hand explore her lithe frame; letting it roam up against her red tunic *(like the one in the poster)** trying to feel her soft smooth skin underneath it.

I felt her pushing her tongue against my teeth, begging me to part them. I did as she wanted, and they met with a clash. She let out a soft, muffled moan as I pushed my tongue into her mouth. I never knew we were moving while we were kissing as I soon pressed Astrid against a flat rock, leaving her no escape...which I don't think she wanted.

I began to grow more bold as I managed to find my way under tunic and began feeling her soft, beautiful skin. At the same time I moved my lips along her jawline, to her ear lobes and started to move down along her neck. Every moan she made just pushed me further on. "H-Hiccup...y-you're...w-wounds" she managed to speak as she was having trouble gathering her thoughts from her current position. I began moving my lips back up the way they came, right back to her lips. It was nice she cared about my well-being, but she spent two weeks, even a month before all of the events, taking care of me. Tonight, it was my turn to take care of her.

"My wounds...can take a backseat to you...tonight" I breathed out before capturing her lips again. I guess she was alright with it because she moved her hands from my head to underneath my shirt and began removing it.

_Normal POV _

Astrid removed his shirt right over and tossed it to the side. He was not bare-skinned as he would have been due to the the bandages wrapped right around his middle and upper torso, where the wound and

cracked ribs were, and his entire right forearm wrapped in bandages as well. But there were slight traces of the bruises he suffered, reminding her of the pain he went through. But even through those bandages, she could see how well-toned he was. Two years of training, and dragon riding, plus smithing had all left their marks on him...and they were very attractive marks.

She could make out an evident outline of abs on his torso. Even his arms were well defined, thin, but she didn't care. They looked capable of winning any fight he was in. Even when her hands trailed against his back, she could feel the strong shoulder and back muscles he had gained. However, the bandages and bruises even made him look more masculine than she could ever dream of him looking...which was well beyond them.

Through those bandages and bruises, she knows what he went through for her, and on his well-toned body...they made him look like a God who had fought his way to make it to his love.

Hiccup wasted no time in performing the same to Astrid. He unclasped the robe on her back from her shoulder pads, and it fell to the soft grass. He unclasped her shoulder pads and let them fall, and soon pulled her red tunic over her head, leaving her only in her breast band. They also managed to toss their shoes off, but ended up falling to the ground, with the soft grass absorbing most of their impact, but that did not break them apart.

Astrid had fallen on top of Hiccup, and he began slowly unbuttoning her spiked skirt which she moved clear once he was done.

"This night...is not going to...be the same...as the others...is it?" Hiccup breathed out, both of them taking a breath of fresh air.

"No it is not" Astrid whispered and clashed their lips once again. Hiccup sat up a bit and without breaking the kiss moved his hands to the braids of her hair, and just as skillfully he had forged Stinger, he let her hair fall in one beautiful, smooth motion, that the very action of it falling played in slow motion in his head, and the only thing that came close to describing it was a river of gold silk, flowing freely and illuminated by the moonlight. He paused in his kissing and took a good look at her. Not even Odin himself could resist such a sight. There she was, in her blue leggings, breast band and her golden hair flowing right down to about three inches above her waist...she was truly a Divine Beauty.

That's when Hiccup flipped the positions and she was on the bottom, and he was on top, once again engaged in a passionate and lustful kiss.

"You are truly not of this world" he breathed in a low voice that Astrid had never heard before...and she loved it. He began trailing down her neck, planting many love bites along it, with one or two licks here and there while he lets his hands explore her goddess-like frame.

"And you...clearly are more...than any Viking...in these lands" she said, getting into the mood as she closed her eyes to enjoy the experience she was receiving from her lover.

"That's because this Viking...will do anything to protect his love"

he said as he stopped his onslaught of kisses and moved up to her face and they locked eyes. He became lost in her sky blue eyes, that bore nothing but love, caring, fire and spirit in them...with a hint of lust as well. She became mesmerized by his emerald green eyes, seeing the care, love, loyalty and young man that she longed for the last month, with lust mixed in with them.

"You've...already proven that...Hiccup" she breathed as she began caressing his legs with hers. He closed his eyes, as he almost knew it was her skin trailing along his pants.

"No I haven't" he said and she began moving his hands to the his belt, as if guided by instinct. "I would die for you in a heartbeat...Astrid. I would fight Loki, Thor and Odin himself just to come back to the world of the living and die for you again...and I'd do it a thousand times over...till the sands of time run out themselves" he said as he moved his hands to the top of her leggings as well.

Astrid couldn't believe what she just heard what Hiccup would do for her. She knew he felt strongly for her, and her for him, but never that strongly. This was a completely new Hiccup from the last one she remembered...and she loved this one even more than the last if that was even possible. They then looked at where their hands were and looked back at each other's eyes.

"A-are you...s-sure...you want to do this?" he asked. She could tell that he was hoping she'd say yes, because now they were too far to stop. But at the same time, he was checking on her if she wanted to do this. He was putting others before his own personal pleasures. She knew no other Viking would be this controlled when it came to a situation like this. But he was also checking because of the severe consequence they might face since they'd be breaking a sacred custom if they did do it. But in all honesty, she didn't care...all she cared was the young man above her makes her his.

"I wouldn't have it any other way" she smiled and kissed him.

The two faithful dragons who had followed them and saw the whole scene unfold before them saw what their humans were about to do, and knew they deserved their privacy. They walked to the entrance of the cave, and unbeknownst to the young lovers inside, it had started to rain. It was loud thunderstorm that could mask any noise.
Perfect.

Toothless and Stormfly arrived at the entrance, which was in plain sight from where Hiccup and Astrid were. The entrance was big enough for both dragons to be beside each other. Toothless extended his right wing while Stormfly extended her left wing. With their wings and bodies covering the entrance, they effectively hid both their riders from view to anyone who was outside.

"Hey you two!" both the dragons heard and saw Ripper walking over to them with a cloak covering him from getting soaked. He rubbed both them under their chin, careful not to hit the knockout spot. "Do you know where Astrid and Hiccup are?" he asked and both dragons just gestured behind their wings.

"Well then I'm going to..." but he was stopped when Toothless pushed him away with his head. "What's wrong Toothless?" he asked, and tried

to go again, but Stormfly this time, pushed him away gently with her head. "What's wrong with you two?" he asked as he stared at the two. They glanced back again to their closed wings and back to Ripper as if telling him 'you don't want to interrupt them'.

That's when Ripper started putting two and two together, and his lips curved into a slight smile. "Hiccup you sly dog" he said with a slight laugh. "Good dragons" he said to Toothless and Stormfly before walking back to the cave. Both Stormfly and Toothless looked at each other and back at their wings which concealed their two riders. For once in a while, both dragons became at ease, since this was the first time in a month, where both their riders had found peace.

When he entered he saw the rest of the teens asleep, save for Heather, who laid by the fire with Razorcut asleep in the back.

"Well, did Hiccup and Astrid make up?" she asked.

"Oh, they've made up alright...in fact they'll be making up for a while" Ripper said sitting next to her, and was amused by her confusion.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Let's just say, I hope Astrid's not in her period" he said, and in a few seconds Heather's eyes went wide and blushed, and had to cover her mouth with her hands to stop her from squealing.

"Well it looks like they've truly made up" she said with a smile as she and Ripper got settled in for a peaceful night...something that no one had in a long time.

****A/N: Hope you guys liked the chapter. This is officially the longest chapter I've ever written on Fanfiction, 6745 words! Hope it wasn't too fast, and just at the right pace, and hopefully it was what you guys were expecting. Take care everyone!****

30. So It Starts

****A/N: Sorry for the long update guys. But here it is.****

****By the way, keep an eye out for my other stories "The Past Defines the Future" and "The Heir to The Dark Brotherhood" as new chapters of them will be coming soon. ****

Astrid's POV

The sound of dragons in the morning, coupled with the early morning rays peaking through the hole in the roof, and the overall serenity of the surroundings we were in, coupled with what took place last night...almost made it feel like a dream or our own little corner of Valhalla, away from all the political trouble and meetings and conflict...and just me and my lover, who had his over my stomach in a protective manner and sound asleep against my back. I could feel his calm breathing against my exposed shoulder, and it was just a reminder of how close we became last night. Since I faced the entrance, I saw that Toothless and Stormfly had never left their posts and by the looks of it, were still awake. We really owed them

tonight.

I then felt a few limbs stirring as I felt him remove one of his legs that were on top of mine and planting a few light kisses on my neck. "Morning" I said quietly and through a giggle.

"Back at ya" he said with a small smirk as I turned and faced him.

"So, I guess we're a...couple now" I said, brushing one of his long bangs away from his eye.

"Yep, we've moved past the 'thing' that we oh so cherished...although I'm finding it hard on how to explain this to your father...and mother" he said, showing a grim, yet comedic expression.

"Are you sure you don't want me to come with you? I mean we both did _it _and we both have to pay the price" I said.

"I know...but after that conversation your father and I had, I think I should be the one to tell him that his daughter and I tied the know...and we're not even married" he said with a slight laugh sitting up and rubbing the sleepiness from his eyes.

"Well, I could tell your mom then" I said, also sitting up and he looked at me, asking me to go on. "Since she knows how close we are, and since it could be a bit of a private discussion, I could talk to your mom and tell her we've taken it to the 'next' level, so to speak" I said, pulling up leggings and getting up, looking for the rest of my clothes and he was looking for his.

"Yeah...that's a good idea. I mean she won't try to kill you if do tell her...by the way who's more prone to killing me, your father or mother?" he asked and I looked at him with half 'really' and half smile face.

"I'm serious" he said through a laugh.

"Well if you must know it's my mother...but with a situation like this, my father might not hesitate to kill you. Are you _sure _you don't want me to come with you? Because it seems it would be for the best" I said. I wouldn't mind coming with him, just to make sure my parents don't try and hurt him.

"No...it's alright. Besides it's something I have to do alone. Are you ready to go?" he asked, already dressed in his tunic, with his leather armour over it.

"Yeah" I replied, now adorning my spiked skirt, red tunic, shoulder pads and the cloak that I fasten on them. "Let's go and get this over with" I said walking to the entrance, Toothless and Stormfly moving aside for us. Hiccup soon caught up and we took a slight pause to look around the huge cavern. By the position of the sun, it was about mid-morning and we saw a few people walking about, gathering water for their caves, moving with life.

"We will have to make our move soon" Hiccup said all of a sudden and I turned to him. "It's been a month since we left Berk, and we have to take it back immediately" he said.

"Yeah...but how are we going to do that...they outnumber us fifteen to one, we'll need an army of our own" I said.

"That's why I have a few villages in mind, ones that have hopefully not succumbed to Drago's demands."

"Agreed, but...until then, you still have to make it past your first battle since recovery...talking to my father. He's most probably up now, you can go talk to him" I said leaving him with Toothless. "And don't worry...he won't kill you...strangle you...but not kill you" I said looking back at him with a smile.

"Oh...that makes me feel so much better" he said in his sarcastic tone, and a wry smile. I laughed a bit and continued on my way back to our cave. However, when I neared the entrance I could hear laughter and shouting going on inside...

"Come on Snotlout pay up...I won the bet fair and square" I heard Ripper say, and he sure was in a happy mood...I wonder why.

"No fair Ripper! How do we know they even did it!" Snotlout replied back. That's when it hit me...they were talking about me and Hiccup last night!? How did they know?! I could feel the anger swelling up inside me...and there was going to be an unfortunate person to bare all of it.

"It's true Snotlout, when Ripper went to check up on them their dragons were blocking the entrance...and we all know what that could mean" I heard Heather say. Oh, so it was Ripper who told them...why am I not surprised? Well, better make myself present.

I entered the cave and saw the group sitting down, their backs against their dragons and I saw a few papers by their sides.

"Hey guys" I said, as if I had just entered and didn't know what they were talking about. I saw Ripper immediately spit out some water he was drinking and everyone scrambled to hide pieces of paper that they had by their sides.

"Astrid...so nice to see you" Heather said nicely, obviously trying to hide something.

"What a-are you doing here Astrid?" Fishlegs asked me.

"I stay here, remember guys?" I asked them, still playing clueless of the situation.

"Why didn't you come last night?" Tuff asked me, and by the way everyone was looking at me, it was only to confirm their bets.

"Oh...I spent some time with Hiccup...is that a problem?" I asked, crossing my arms over chest.

"No...it's not...just, what did you do with him?" Ruff asked.

"Well judging by all of your attention to my personal life...Hiccup and I had sex" I stated plainly.

"I told you! I told you Snotlout! You owe me a yak, five chickens, a

week's catch and your sword! Yes!" Ripper screamed in joy throwing his papers in the air. I couldn't help but smile, with a somewhat angered grin.

"I can't believe my cousin got laid before me...and with you of all people" Snotlout said, pointing to me.

"Don't worry Snot, you'll find someone...eventually" Fishlegs said the last part quietly, but we all laughed at the truth in his joke.

"Besides this makes Astrid taken now...so no one can lay hands on her" Ruff said, smiling proudly at me. "I also can't believe she got laid before me" she said with a laugh.

"That actually is a surprise" I laughed as well. Our interesting and fun conversation ended when we had a new visitor.

"I see you all are having a good time" Valka, as I've heard her be called and Hiccup's mother, came into the cave.

"Oh well we just found out some...exciting news ma'am" Ripper said.

"I can see...then you won't mind if you leave the cave for a while, all of you" she said looking at Fishlegs, Tuffnut, Heather, Ruffnut and Snotlout. I knew immediately that she knew about what me and Hiccup did last night. How does everyone know?

"No problem...come on guys" Ripper said getting up and being followed by the guys and their dragons, leaving only me and Valka in the cave. She didn't have her eyes on the path that led into the room we were in, but she was listening intently to make sure they were out of earshot. She then walked up to Stormfly and petted her under her chin and mumbled something to her. Stormfly then left the same way the guys did.

"She's going to make sure no one interrupts our discussion" she said having a seat near the remnants of the fire. "Please...we have much to discuss" she said, gesturing to a place next to her and we sat down.

"I bet you already know what this talk will be about?" she asked, making eye contact with me. I nodded my head, knowing how undoubtedly awkward this talk was going to be.

"And since you're wondering how I know was because I heard your friends making their bets early this morning, and judging by Ripper winning, you two did it" she explained. One more thing that Ripper will have to pay for. "So, mind telling me what happened until that moment?"

"Well...he took me there to apologize to me for saying those...things...back at Berk, and I told him it was alright since he did deserve to say it, and we looked into each other's eyes, and we saw the...longing...for each other, we kissed and things just took off from there" I explained. I was sure I was as red as a Monstrous Nightmare. However, I became nervous when she bowed her head and sighed in what I believe was disappointment.

"I'm sorry... I know we're too young to do that...or that we broke marital custom, but we..."

"It's not that Astrid" she said, raising her head to stop me.

"Then what is it? You seem extremely worried"

"It's the end of the month" she answered.

"Ok...what's so special about the end of the month?"

"Astrid...I've traveled a lot over the 13-14 years I've been away, and I've been to many villages where I saw a lot of marriages and so on, and the woman getting pregnant a month after the consummation...and the thing that tied all of them in was they consummated at the end of the month" she said, looking seriously at me. I began to panic based on that.

"Wait, if they got pregnant at the end of the month...then that means..."

"The Gods might be performing that miracle of life in you right now...within a month or two, you could be pregnant with Hiccup's child" she said, looking at me with worry in her eyes.

No, no, no...it can't happen. It just can't! I can't have Hiccup's child forming inside me!...At least not yet anyways...Oh Gods, this can't be happening. I put my arm to my head as I began to feel lightheaded. I then felt another hand on my unoccupied one.

"Astrid...calm down" she said, placing both her hands along my shoulders and trying to make eye contact with me.

"Calm down?! How can I calm down when there is a HUGE possibility of me being pregnant?!" I yelled back, sure that panic was written all over my face.

"Astrid, you are rushing into this. You just consummated yesterday. We do not know whether you will be pregnant or not...the end of the month is when a woman is most likely to become pregnant...NOT always" she said firmly. I finally looked her in the eyes immediately calmed down a bit. Once she was certain that I was in a calmer state, she released her hands from my shoulders and placed them back in her lap, allowing me to hold my shoulders, and slow down my breathing.

"I'll say this again Astrid...there is no certainty of you becoming pregnant. I won't lie, the chances are high of becoming pregnant at the end of the month, but there is that small chance where you do not, and that is what we are hoping for...because now is not the time to be carrying a child, especially a person like you" she said.

"And what if I will be pregnant? And the timing as well? We're in the middle of a war now and I can't be carrying a child into battle...and if I tell Hiccup, he won't even let me lift a hammer!" I belonged on the battlefield with my friends and people. Especially in a time like this I couldn't be hindered by Hiccup's protectiveness. Don't get me wrong...I'd like to have children...but _not now_..>

"Then we have to hope Hiccup will listen to reason about how you're capable enough of fighting" she said.

"I highly doubt that happening...I mean he'll be thinking of the child's life tied in with me...and he won't want to risk losing both of us...that is if I do become pregnant. What am I going to do?" I said, burying my head in my hands.

"Here...I thought this might come in handy" she said. I looked up and saw her holding a small leather pouch, about the size of her hand. I opened my palms and she placed it in them. "It's called a contraceptive...it's supposed to prevent a girl from getting pregnant, girls who are sexually active. It's something I encountered on many of my travels, I thought it might come in handy" she said.

I opened the bag and saw what appeared to be ground up leaves. "This will stop me from getting pregnant?" I asked, looking back up at her.

"It should stop you...no guarantee but based on the stories I've heard, it should work, if you take it immediately" she said, handing me a flask of water. I took a small handful of the leaves and tossed it in my mouth. The strange thing was it didn't have a taste...not that leaf taste, or herb or stick...no taste at all. I took a sip of the water to help it get down my throat.

"You'll have to take it for about four to seven more days just to make sure there's no chance of you getting pregnant" she said as I gave her back her flask.

"Thank you" I said, smiling gratefully, and she returned the smile.

"Anything for my future daughter-in-law" she said with a wink, and I laughed a bit. "By the way, where is Hiccup?" she asked. That's when my eyes started to widen in shock.

"He's going to talk to my parents" I said, suddenly realizing the full scale of that outcome. "Ugh! I shouldn't have let him do that...why did I let him talk me into it!?" I yelled holding my head and getting up.

"Don't worry, we'll go to their cave and hope your parents haven't got their axes out" she said getting up and running outside, with me close behind.

Hiccup's POV

I was just standing outside the cave where Astrid's parents and brother were staying. By telling them that their daughter and I consummated, outside wedlock, and with what has happened in the past few months, I believe that they should see I am trusting them to not hurt me once I tell them because if Astrid were here, then that would show I can't handle telling them the truth that they'll be bound to hear eventually, from rumours or someone else.

"Alright bud, let's do this" I said, patting his head to which he crooned back, and we both walked into their cave, hoping that I would come back out alive.

I made my way through the due covered walls, with traces of moss here and there, and soon entered into a small cavern where there was a fire in the centre with Aaron, Ingrid and Riptide having their breakfast. By the looks of it they didn't notice my presence so I knocked on the wall.

Aaron was the first to turn his head, and I was met with dis-pleasured eyes.

"Hiccup! You're alive!" Riptide said getting up and running to give me a hug.

"OW!...Yep Tide, I'm alive..." I said returning the hug.

"Can I see your battle scars? I bet they look awesome!" he said.

"Riptide!" his mother called out with a disapproving look.

"What? I just want to see his scars...that's cool!" he said.

"So Hiccup, what brings you here?" Ingrid asked with a polite tone, ignoring Riptide's lack of privacy.

"I uh...well...I...came here to talk to you and your husband...alone" I said, glancing at Riptide and was gesturing to them to ask him to leave. Ingrid seemed to have got the message.

"Riptide, please run along outside now...you can play with Gustav and the others" she said, and he left without any resistance.

"So what is it do you want to talk about?" her father asked, giving me his full attention.

"Well I.."

"Wait, before you start...I need to say something, Hiccup...I'm sorry for the way I spoke to you the other day. I aim was to come and hear your side of it, but I put all the blame on you...it was mostly because Astrid attempted to commit suicide because she thought she lost you...and I believe that's where my anger came from, and I let it control me during that talk...I just wanted to say I'm sorry" he said standing up and walking towards me. When he was just a foot away, he reached out his hand, waiting for me to take it.

In all honesty, I couldn't believe what I was hearing because I wasn't expecting it. Here I was, having prepared a huge explanation of how his daughter and I consummated outside wedlock, and he drops his apology for lashing out at me when we last spoke. I thought I would have to earn his forgiveness back but from what has just happened, that isn't the case anymore. I reached my hand out and held his with a firm grip and looked him in the eye.

"Thank you" I said. A small smile grazed his lips as he sat back down.

"Come sit. So what is it did you want to discuss with us?" he asked as I sat by the fire, both their eyes on me.

"Here's the funny thing...it's about Astrid and me" I said, with a

short laugh.

"There aren't any more problems are there? By the way how did the apology go?" Ingrid asked.

"Oh that was great. I really appreciated them for it...and there aren't any problems with me and Astrid...quite the contrary actually" I said. I could feel my pulse beginning to race, my palms became a bit sweaty and my breathing had increased a bit.

"We...uh...we..." I looked at them, and they were waiting for me to spit it out but from the look Ingrid was getting, it looked like she knew now.

"You two...oh Gods" she said quietly, covering her mouth with both hands. It was nice to see them there rather than reaching for her sword at her belt. She looked at her husband and he looked back, only realizing what she was assuming, and he looked back at me.

"You and Astrid...my daughter...consummated?" he asked. I couldn't tell if he was mad, happy, stunned, or about to go berserk on me by his voice.

"Yes" I said, looking at the both of them when I said that answer. I could see the full effect of the shock take over their faces as Aaron brought his hands and pulled his hair back while Ingrid just looked down, shaking her head.

"How?!" Aaron asked. I suspected it was supposed to come out in a shout but more of in a loud whisper.

"After they apologized to me...I wanted to apologize to her for what I did back on Berk...but I didn't want to do it front of the others, so I led to her to a secret cavern and I told her how sorry was for breaking my love for her. I told her I was a fool but she forgave me...and then we kissed...but it was different. I had been apart from her for over two years but that kiss, after not talking to each other for a month...that was much more emotional than those two years from being away" I said. They were still reeling in from the news that their daughter had lost her purity.

"When we pulled apart...we looked into each other's eyes and saw something we had never seen...lust" I said with a slow breath. They had now directed their attention towards me as I continued. Even that kiss we had...it was so different from the others...it wasn't passionate...but at the same time, it was much more...and when we looked into each other's eyes, we knew that we needed each other..." I finished.

"Mama! Papa!" we heard all of a sudden and I turned around to see Astrid run in, to my side, followed by my mom with Stormfly behind them.

"They didn't do anything to you have they?" she asked, looking over me.

"No...they haven't"

"Not yet anyway" we heard her father say and we looked at him.

"Astrid...is this true...have you truly lost your purity?" her mother asked standing up, followed by her father.

She looked at me and I nodded, since there was no going back. "Yes Mama, I have" she said strongly, looking at her parents.

"Valka...I if that boy wasn't your son or the future heir of the tribe, his head would be rolling into the fire pit right about now" her father said, anger evident in his voice.

"I know you have the right Aaron, since the law does say if a couple has consummated outside of marriage, then the father or any male relative of the girl has the right to kill the man who 'violated' her...but this situation is none of that...they both love each other and couldn't control their emotions. They did what they believed was right" she defended them.

"Except other people won't see it that way" he countered.

"Aaron...you are such a hypocrite!" she said with a laugh, also making Ingrid and Aaron blush. This was going to be interesting.

"Mama, what is she talking about?" Astrid asked, letting go of me.

"Your parents here consummated outside wedlock themselves" my mom said crossing her arms over her chest with a smug smile. I looked back at her parents with bewilderment...They broke that law?

"Mama, Papa, is that true?" Astrid asked, looking at them with the same look I had.

"It very much is Astrid. Stoick accidentally found them in the forest, naked under their clothes and it was evident by the stain of blood in the grass that they broke the law. That is when you were coming to be" she said looking at Astrid.

"What do you mean mom?" I asked.

"She means that one month later, Ingrid was pregnant with Astrid" Aaron answered, almost forcing himself to look at us, and only then I realized that he and Ingrid were blushing like Hel.

"Ingrid began having morning symptoms and signs of abdominal cramps...the only explanation was that she was pregnant" my mom said.

"I managed to hide it from my parents, since they were very strict when it comes to tradition. I confined in Valka here, and I told your father, Astrid. As soon as I did, he popped the question to marry him. His and my family arranged the contract and the rest is history...only Stoick and Valka were the two people who knew" Ingrid explained.

I covered my mouth since I didn't want to be seen on the verge of laughter.

"We're worried because, Astrid, your chances of becoming pregnant are extremely high at the end of the month...and we all know that you two aren't ready to become parents and you Astrid will refuse to sit out of this war even with child" her father said.

"Wait, there's a huge risk of you getting pregnant?" I asked, looking at Astrid. I never thought of the risk of her getting pregnant, if I did, I probably would have stopped us from going too far.

"It's alright Hiccup...I gave her what people call a contraceptive...it's a sort of leaf that stops a woman from getting pregnant, or lowering their chances...so if Astrid takes this for 4-7 days, she should be alright" my mom said.

"Wow mom, just imagine your calm mind in our village if you didn't leave" I laughed.

"But I am not letting this go young man" I heard her father say.

"Sir, even if Astrid would have gotten pregnant, I would have taken full responsibility of it, and I would never have abandoned her during that stage...besides, she would have killed me herself if I did" I said, to which everyone laughed and receiving a punch in the arm from said girl and an irritated smile.

"Well mama, papa, you don't have to worry. I'm sure I won't get pregnant thanks to Hiccup's mom" she said.

"Now that that's settled, I wanted to talk with you and the others about our next move" my mom said walking out, followed by Astrid and I.

The others were conveniently in front of the cave when we exited, apparently talking about bets of some sort. "Hiccup...thanks to you I'm a rich man now!" Ripper exclaimed, hanging his arm around my shoulders.

"What?" I asked confused.

"Thanks a lot Hiccup" Snotlout said with a pissed off face.

"Yeah Hiccup...I mean how could you do that to us!" Tuff also said, same facial expressions as Snotlout.

"Ok...what's going on?" I asked, gesturing with my hands for everyone to stop.

"Apparently Ripper made bets of what we did last night...and because I told him it was true, that confirmed the bet and he won" Astrid said, folding her arms over chest and a half smile on her face.

"Well in that case...I'm glad I helped Ripper, since there was one person here who thought I could do it" I said. I really didn't like the attention going on right now, but might as well go with the flow...since I am the only one out of my peers who did it.

"Hey...I bet on Astrid...by the way, who dominated?" Ruff asked. Astrid and I both immediately blushed a deep red and I could see

Astrid glance at me before turning away.

"Really!? Gods...Thanks a lot Hiccup, I'm out three spears!" she exclaimed handing Heather a piece of paper.

"If you all are done with who bed who, we have more pressing matters to discuss" my mom said, effectively ending that conversation.

"Now...we have no eyes on the state of Berk right now. We don't know if Drago has prisoners or if he's moved on from Berk...but we have to assume he's still at Berk, and possibly there are no survivors" she said.

"Mom...dad is still there with many other people" I said. I didn't like how she seemed to assume the worst almost immediately.

"We're speculating for now Hiccup...since we're not sure of what is happening in Berk right now."

"What about Trader Johann? Shouldn't he arrive to Berk about now?" Fishlegs asked.

"I saw him out there while patrolling a few days ago...he says there's a blockade about 10 miles out of Berk. They are Outcast and Berserker ships...so Drago must have left" Ripper said.

"That's a good chance for us to move in" Astrid suggested.

"But we don't know where Drago and the rest of his army have gone. Or if they're even in the area" I said.

"Where could he have gone?" Heather asked.

"With Berk under his control...Drago has taken one of the main obstacles out of his way, there shouldn't be anything stopping him from moving westwards" Ripper said.

"Unless he's gone the other way around" I suggested. "I mean, if you look at the map..." I said, pulling out a map I kept in my satchel and laying it on the ground, "...there's still the Bog Burglars and the Meathead tribes...and given these two tribes worked against him, he might want pay back" I said.

"He might be planning to take them...Johann said that there was no evidence of any attack when he visited them just a week ago" Ripper said.

"If he's not there...then where is he?" Ruff asked.

"What is the other prize in this region?" I asked. Everyone then looked at the map, looking for any landmark that could hold significance to Drago's plans.

"The only other target is Atlaka" Snotlout said.

"But that's impossible...that is the largest settlement of Vikings, with its own army and has a strong defense perimeter" Ripper said.

"But he did train in that army for over twenty years, and lived in that city as well. He would know it inside out which would make it an easy target" my mom said.

"That's if he's not already taken it" I said, and everyone cast worried glances at me.

"He said he was there, watching me train and grow. Someone was bound to see him but never spoke of it, and if he grew up there for twenty years, and knowing that he plans well ahead, he would have made strong connections with the most powerful councilmen and women in the city...which he might have already done a while ago" I said. I didn't like the idea as much as the others, but it was a possibility.

"But there didn't seem to be any sign of a corrupt council when we there" Ripper stated.

"Well...possibly because Drago hasn't called in his favours yet. He might be pulling his strings in Atlaka about now" Astrid said.

"Or the other villages he has under him" Fishlegs said.

"So what do we do? Do we just sit here or go out there and find out?" Snotlout asked. They all turned to me, waiting to hear my response.

"Hiccup, you're still healing. You'll be confined to this island until I know that you are well enough to carry on" my mom said all of a sudden. I was about to protest but Astrid cut me off.

"She's right Hiccup. We'll need our best rider for the real fight" she said with a small smile.

"I could do recon flights to the villages and even Berk if you want?" Ripper suggested.

"You can count me in" Snotlout said with a thumbs up.

"Us too!" the twins yelled while they head-butted.

"You'll need someone to help plan your strategies" Fishlegs said. It looks like everything was coming together now. There's not much we could do right now, but it'll be a start. Recon flights are our best bet to see what they're up to. The most strategic position right now is Atlaka...its large army and location make it a dangerous and possible ally for Drago. We'll need to break his ties with the people there and do it as soon as possible.

"So what's our first target?" Tuff asked.

"We need to check up on the Bog Burglars and Meatheads to make sure they haven't joined Drago" I said.

"Ripper, Ruff, Tuff and Snotlout, you're with me. We'll leave now" Astrid said.

"Yes ma'am" Ripper replied, running to get Razorcut while the others went to get their dragons.

"Are you sure you want to do this Astrid?" my mom asked.

"We've been waiting for over a month. We have to start somewhere. The people back on Berk and the tribes who refuse to bow down to Drago depend on our progress from now on" she said.

"I just wish I could be there with you...I mean, I'm missing out on all the fun" I said with a shrug of my shoulders.

"Don't worry Hiccup...you should be fine for service in the next two weeks" Astrid said with a light punch on my arm.

"The dragons are ready Astrid" Ripper said, with him and the others landing in front of us. That's when I took her hand in mine and she looked at me.

"Please be careful Astrid...we don't know whether to treat Atlaka or the other villages as enemies now" I said. She simply gave me a reassuring smile and placed her hand on my cheek.

"Hiccup, I'm worried about leaving you here..._alone_...where I can't keep an eye on you. But thank you for the concern. I'll be fine" she said, and gave a soft kiss on my lips before she parted and hopped onto Stormfly. I watched them take off into the air and head for the Bog Burglar and Meathead tribe. I felt an arm on my shoulder and looked to see my mom standing there. _
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"They'll be fine Hiccup...after all, you taught them whatever you knew" she said with an encouraging smile.

"I hope so mom...I hope so" I said.

31. The War Starts

**A/N: Well guys...I don't know what to say. After my last update for _Past Defines the Future_ I had some assignments and tests in school that week. And after that...you won't believe it but my laptop DIED! Apparently the motherboard got screwed up and the technicians I took it to said I'd be better off getting a new laptop, unless I wanted to pay a ton of money to get it repaired. Plus that laptop did give me problems and maybe in some, wierd way it was a blessing in disguise.
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**Since I'm going off to University in September, I'm looking for a new laptop. I wrote this chapter in the library I live close by to. Anyway, I'll be getting a new laptop tomorrow, so don't worry guys.
**

_Astrid's POV _

"So what do you think we'll find there?" asked Tuffnut. We had been flying for six hours now, with only one stopover on a small island popping out of the ocean. Judging by the position of the sun, we were well into the afternoon.

"Not sure...but we have to be careful. We don't know if Drago, Dagur or Alvin are there or if the two tribes are under their control. But if they are we take the direct approach" I replied. The direct approach might sound like what Snotlout would say but I figured if

they are there, their men will know who we are and will not hesitate to capture or kill us. When I think about it, they might be expecting us to sneak in, not take the offensive approach. Or that's what Drago could be expecting and has a small armada waiting for us. Gods, warfare tactics really take their toll on the mind.

"I agree with Astrid. We'll have to show Drago that we can hit back hard and we can start by denying him control over the Bog Burglars and the Meatheads" Ripper backed me up.

"I love this plan" Snotlout commented.

"How far are we until the Bog Burglars?" Ruff asked.

"I'll scout up ahead, you guys hang back here for a while" I said and I allowed Stormfly to shoot ahead, leaving the others behind. Lucky for us we ran into a few clouds, perfect cover for us. I directed Stormfly to fly in a chain of them that led to the Bog Burglars. It wasn't long before I saw the tribe, and the few mountains and hills that decorated their land. But caught my eye were ten ships near their docks, all with the Berserker mark on their sails. My fears were confirmed as I didn't see any fighting going on, which meant the Berserkers have been here for a while. I managed to take note of a few more threats. There were guards patrolling the streets, catapults were at the ready along the hills and cliffs overlooking the ocean, about fifteen in total with three men stationed at each one. I didn't see any of the Bog Burglar women, which means they're being held captive somewhere.

"Come on Stormfly, let's head back" I said, but as soon as I turned her around I saw a Skrill shoot up blocking my path with Dagur upon it, a sick smile on his face.

"Well, well, well...what do we have here boys?" he asked. I then looked around to see four Monstrous Nightmares fly up, and circled me, preventing me from escaping.

"Easy Stormfly" I rested a palm on her neck and turned my attention back to Dagur.

"Did you really think you could get by undetected?" he asked. "Oh yes of course you did, trying to copy Hiccup. By the way, how is he? Recovered from those broken ribs, dislocated shoulder...courtesy of moi, oh and let's not forget that he was skewered!" he said excitedly.

"Please keep talking so I have better reasons to dish out harder hits on you" I said, holding Stormfly's reins more tightly.

"Oh...feisty aren't we? That means I don't have to hold back when I beat you...literally" he said.

"What are you doing here Dagur? Being Drago's little squire?"

"Pff...snark comments won't dent me Astrid...and if you must know, I'm in charge of my _ex-girlfriend's _tribe" he said gesturing to the village below him.

"Really? Ex-girlfriend? At least I now know you never ruled in bed. I

mean that's the only reason she left you right?" I said with a smile. THAT had to hurt and it was evident since his lips curved into a snarl. His men also laughed at first but shut it when he gave them a death glare.

"You know maybe I had this all wrong" he said back in a regular tone. "I shouldn't have done all those things to Hiccup...I should have done them to you!" he said and prepared his dragon for a strike but then we saw a few spikes hit one of his men and the dragon, sending them screaming back down to Midguard.

"Then I hope you don't mind if I do those things to you!" Ripper yelled as he and Razorcut slammed straight on into the Skrill and Dagur knocking them out of my way.

"Hookfang, fire it up!" I heard Snotlout yell as he came bursting through the clouds and slammed another one of Dagur's men off the dragon, plummeting to the ocean.

"Don't leave us out yet!" Tuff yelled as Barf and Belch came through the clouds, setting up the gas cloud and igniting it before, sending the two remaining dragons flying in random directions.

"Guys come on!" I yelled as I turned Stormfly around and headed for the village. We had to get those catapults down before they could cause trouble for us. "Snotlout, Ruff, Tuff, take out those catapults now and any one aiming an arrow at you. I'm going to help Ripper with Dagur!" I said, them nodding in reply and I veered off to join the real fight.

I saw some of the clouds were beginning to darken. That was not a good sign. I could already see Dagur and the Skrill trying to head into the clouds. If he got that Skrill into the clouds, then we'll all be done for...unless. I saw Ripper and Razorcut repeatedly throw themselves at them to try and prevent them from reaching the clouds, but it usually ended up with them being knocked away or missing the Skrill because of its speed.

"Do you really think you can keep up with the fastest dragon out there!?" Dagur yelled.

"Second fastest Dagur...a Skrill can never beat a Night Fury" Ripper shot back. Good, he was keeping him distracted, if I can just time it right. "You do know if you go up there you'll electrocute yourself right?" he asked, dodging a blast of lightning at them.

"Courtesy of Drago" he said gesturing to his saddle. "Made completely out of a non-conductive material fused with the leather to make the saddle, as well as the reins. I can fly into the darkest of storm clouds and let Deathstrike here charge up for however long he likes!" he said, and just at that moment, we saw that the Skrill had begun to take in the lightning the storm clouds were producing and the bolts of lightning gliding across its skin appeared to avoid the saddle, not even harming Dagur...great, we have a lunatic on a dragon that can electrocute anyone he pleases.

"What are we going to do?" Ripper asked as we watched the Skrill charge up.

I began looking around to see if we could lead him to a tight space

and one of us could flank him...no, that wouldn't work, that Skrill is just too fast to corner. Come on think! What would Hiccup do? What would he do? That's when I realized it. That Skrill's biggest weakness is right below us...but it will be hard to force him down, and he's too fast for us to get a hit on him, or even for Razorcut to ram him...but if Dagur were to fall...

"Here goes nothing!" I yelled.

"Wait Astrid...what are you..." I couldn't hear him finish his sentence as the distance grew between us and closed between Dagur and I.

"Alright Dagur!" I yelled catching his attention. "You want me? Well...here I am!" as soon as Stormfly was just a wingspan away, I jumped off of her and tackled Dagur right off of his Skrill, sending both of us plummeting into the ocean.

"What in the name of Odin's beard is wrong with you?!" he yelled as I held him by his collar as we plummeted to the waters below us.

"What's the matter Dagur? I thought you loved a little crazy!?" I yelled back, an amused smile grazing my lips to his terrified expression. However, his expression did change into a sadistic smile when he turned his eyes back to me.

"Well then, guess I was wrong about you. You are probably more deranged than I am...which is why once Deathstrike catches me along with you, I'll take you back and have my fun with you" he said. I just rolled my eyes before I sucker-punched him in the jaw.

"That was for even suggesting that" I said, before giving him a right hook. "That was for nearly beating Hiccup to death" I said, then I gave him one of my signature right hooks, "That was for dislocating his shoulder!" and this, I pushed him back a bit and did one roll to gain enough momentum and force for what I was about to do, and with it momentum of that roll, I brought my leg down, right on the centre of his chest, which sent him falling to the ocean with greater speed, not before yelling "is for everything else!" and watched him yell and flail his arms in terror as he fell to his death.

A squawk from my right caught my attention and I saw Stormfly diving alongside me. "Good girl" I said before reaching out for my saddle and once I planted myself upright, she gradually got out of the dive. I looked to see Dagur still falling down. Damn it, where was the...my question was answered when a dark purple blur shot past me towards him. Perfect!

"What the Hel were you thinking pulling off a stunt like that?!" Ripper yelled, pulling alongside beside me after Stormfly had gotten out of the dive and came to safe stop. I looked at him and grinned sheepishly.

"I pulled off a Hiccup?" I said shrugging my shoulders. He shook his head in disbelief.

"Well you're lucky that Hiccup wasn't here to see you do that! I mean you just consummated and now you nearly kill yourself trying to fight Dagur!?"

"My plan worked didn't it?"

"What was your plan?! It would have helped me if you told me what it was!"

"Look below" I stated and we both looked down to see Dagur's Skrill getting below him, catching him in his saddle.

"Your plan was to prove Deathstrike's loyalty to Dagur?" he asked.

"Wait for it..." I said. We then saw Dagur struggling on Deathstrike's reins and that the dragon himself was struggling to slow down, and before you knew it, both Dagur and the Skrill fell into the cold waters and under the surface. I looked back at Ripper with a smirk on my face.

"Again...would have helped if you told me that before you pulled off a Hiccup" he said, a small smile grazing his lips.

"Now come on, we have to help the others!" I said and we started our way back to the village. We could see that Snotlout and the Twins had ridden the village of most Berserker men and were picking off the stragglers, as were their dragons.

"Their ships are still a threat" Ripper pointed and I followed his gaze to ten ships at the docks, men readying their crossbows and catapults.

"You know what to do" I said.

"With pleasure!" he yelled back and put Razorcut into a dive. The ships were lined in a row at the docks, side by side. They saw Ripper and Razorcut approaching and immediately their archers turned onto them, but fortunately the catapults were already set in place and couldn't be turned. They did fire but none of the arrows came close to hitting them. He made Razorcut fly just above the water surface and when they were about fifteen feet in front of the ship, Razorcut flung Ripper into the air and flew right into the side of the ship and came out the other, and repeating the process for the other nine ships which all lined side by side with each other. It really helps having a Boulder Class dragon like a Whispering Death and its ability to burrow through almost everything. I guess the reason why he flung Ripper off of him was to protect him from the debris that would be caused by his attacks. But once Razorcut came through the last ship, Ripper landed right back on and they flew clear of the sinking ships.

"Text book work Razorcut" he said flying back to my side and petting him.

"Come on, let's meet up with the others" I said, and we flew to the cliff overlooking the sea from their village. Snotlout, the Twins and their dragons were already waiting for us.

"Loved the destruction of the ships Ripper, that was awesome...I mean how Razorcut tore right through them all at once! Man, really wish I had a Whispering Death" Tuff said as we landed. But Belch immediately nudged him with his head and looked at him. "Whoops, sorry Belch" he

said.

"Was the village any trouble?" I asked.

"Not really, managed to get rid of all the Berserkers. Some fled like the chickens they were" Ruff said twirling her spear in her hand.

"What about Dagur?"

"Astrid took care of him and his Skrill" Ripper said. Just as he said that, we heard a roar and saw the Skrill flying to us but slowly. Clearly that fall into the ocean has affected it. And we could see a pissed off Dagur on top of it.

"All of your men have fled Dagur. Your mini invasion fleet has been destroyed. You're all alone now. Run along back to Drago and tell him of your failure to protect the Bog Burglar tribe from _four _dragon riders!" I yelled. We were still on our dragons, who were ready to attack if Dagur tried anything.

"NO NO NO! You think you've all won?! This is far from over! Watch your back Astrid...because I've just added you on to my kill list!" he yelled and turned his dragon around for the long flight back to where ever Drago was. As soon as he was a safe distance away, I turned back to the others.

"Did you guys start looking for survivors?"

"We were about to. We thought we heard noises coming in from the cellar of their vegetable's shop" Snotlout said.

"Alright, start there. Everyone else pan out and bring anyone you find to the village centre" I said, and we all went our separate ways. I decided to search for the Chief first, and saw what might be her house. It was big, sort of on its own like Hiccup's house in Berk and had a large wooden dragon head above the door. I made my way to the door, with Stormfly right behind me.

"Is anyone in there?" I asked, knocking the door twice.

"Yes! We're in here! Help us!" I heard a woman's voice yell. I tried to open the door but it was jammed, so I pulled out my axe, and signalled Stormfly to knock down the door. She did so within a second and rolled in and got into an attack position. On the far side of the main room, I saw two women, their hands held by chains to a wooden beam above their heads.

"Stormfly, spine shot!" I said, and she fired four spines hitting the four chains with her pin-point accuracy and breaking them. The two women fell down to their knees, the chain cuffs at their wrists. I immediately ran up to them. "Did they do anything to you guys?" I asked as I broke the cuffs with my axe.

"Apart from imprisoning us and raping some of our women, no nothing else" the older woman said, getting up and tending to the younger woman next to her. "Are you alright Camicazi?" she asked, to which the girl nodded. I kept watch at the door, where Stormfly was waiting for us, in case the others came.

"Thank you...uh.."

"Astrid" I replied. The two of them got to their feet and made their way towards me and out of the house.

"I am Big-Boobied Bertha, Chief of the Bog Burglars...this is my daughter, Camicazi" she said gesturing to the younger blonde beside her who appeared to be my age. "Should we be wary of your dragon?"

"Not at all ma'am. She's extremely loyal and since we just drove out the Berserkers and found you two captive, she knows to defend you as well" I said.

"It's just that, Dagur had attacked us with dragons and we're not sure which ones or whom we can trust right now" she said.

"You can trust me ma'am. My friends are also searching for more survivors as we speak and we will meet back at the village centre." The Chief nodded in reply as we ourselves continued to look through more buildings. The guys had made quick work of the Berserkers in the village, their corpses' lying here and there.

"They took us by surprise. We tried to defend as best as we could but they overwhelmed us with their newfound dragons, especially the one Dagur was riding" Camicazi said.

"How long were they occupying the village?" I asked.

"They attacked two weeks ago and made quick work of us. We managed to take down a few of them, but in the end their land and air forces overwhelmed us and they captured us. They killed some of my women in battle...Odin rest their souls in the Halls of Valhalla...they raped some of the others, the young and more beautiful women, and they locked us in our houses and Dagur had his men patrol the streets, making sure no one escaped and if they did, his men could do what they pleased with them" Bertha described. It really was a good thing we decided to make our move in this war...I only regret we couldn't start this sooner.

"I'm sorry we took so long to aid you" I said as we neared the centre. The Twins, Snotlout and Ripper were there with their dragons and all the survivors they had found.

"You have nothing to be sorry for Astrid. I heard what had happened when Drago, Alvin and Dagur attacked Berk, how Drago forced you to marry him and how Hiccup arrived to duel him...and well the rest...how is he?" she asked.

"He's recovering ma'am. That's the only reason why he isn't with us. He would never miss an opportunity to take the fight back to Drago" I said with a smile, and she did as well. That's when her face gave the look as if a candle had been lit in her mind.

"Oh! So you're Astrid Hofferson. Now I remember you. Hiccup spoke highly of you when my daughter and I ran into him in Atlaka" she said.

"Well I ran into him...like _ran into him_...I might have pissed off a few men while I was there and after a few bruises here and there on them I took off" Cami said with a small laugh. "Wait, so if your Astrid, then that means you and Hiccup are a.."

"A couple, yes" I replied. We reached the centre then and all the women and young girls crowded around the Chief and Camicazi, everyone crying tears of joy and sorrow as I'm guessing some of their shield-maidens weren't there to celebrate this moment.

"They were all the survivors we found, Astrid, and we searched the entire village from head to foot" Ripper briefed me.

"Alright everyone!" Bertha yelled, effectively silencing the crowd. "Thanks to the Dragon Riders of Berk, we have been rescued from Dagur's hands...but rest assured we will not forget the brave women who fell at their swords defending us and defending their home. Their souls rest now in Valhalla, where I'm sure they're with all the other brave and strong women of the Bog Burglars. We will never forget them...and one way in which we can help their legacies and spirits live on...is to take the fight to Dagur, who is just a pawn in this war...under the command of Drago...we will avenge them...that is why from this moment, we are allying ourselves with Berk. The four Dragon Riders here who took it upon themselves, after their own loss, to help us in our time of need bare witness to this, and believe me Astrid Hofferson...we will fight at your backs and Drago will have to cut us down, before he or his men even think about scratching the skin of your people!" she yelled, pulling out her sword and raising it to the sky, joined with the chorus of every single woman in that crowd.

The others and I couldn't help but smile at the scene. But this was just one small victory in the war. We had to prepare for the rest.

"We have to get word of this back to Hiccup. Ripper did you bring Sharpshot?" I asked, turning to him.

"Right here, Astrid" he said, pulling out the small yellow dragon. I pulled a parchment out of my saddle and began to write:

We've just driven out the Berserkers from the Bog Burglar's tribe. We will be based here until further notice, but we need more forces. Could you send Thornado with Valka to us? We'll need him for our next target...the Meathead tribe.

I rolled up the parchment and tied it to his leg. "Alright Sharpshot, do your stuff" I said as I released him and he began flying in the direction of the island.

"What now?" Ruff asked, watching the small dragon fly off.

"We prepare for our next fight...the Meathead tribe" I said.

"But what about Drago? Surely he might send his forces here, or to the Meatheads to help defend his catch" Ripper stated.

"That's why I need you to perform a recon flight now" I said.

"With pleasure captain" he said with a wink, taking off with Razorcut to the Meathead clan.

I looked back to where Bertha and Cami were, and saw they were making their way towards me.

"Where is Ripper going?" Cami asked.

"I sent him on a recon mission of the Meathead clan. That'll be our next target, and we need to know if Drago will send more forces to protect it" I explained.

"Good plan, but we also need to rebuild our defenses in case he plans on attacking us again" Bertha said.

"Already thought of that. I've sent air-mail to Hiccup and the others to send in reinforcements" I said.

"Air-mail?" Cami asked.

"I'll explain later, but for now, we have a lot of work to do"

32. The Dragon Trapper

****A/N:** Sorry for the late update guys. IB exams are approaching in May so I'll warn you now not to expect any updates between May 2nd and May 20th, as I'll be studying and writing my exams during that time. Also I'll be preparing for them till May 1st as well, so I might be able to update The Past Defines The Future sometime this week...maybe. ******

****But** after May 20th, I will be able to update anytime I desire, so until then, and enjoy the chapter. This is an extremely long chapter and I hope it will make up for the time I've been off.******

****Also,** if you guys visit the HTTYD page on Facebook, you'll see how Eret looks. And since he's voiced by Kit Harrington, I can't wait to hear that voice from him. ******

Astrid's POV

The village was bustling with activity; women setting up new catapults, swords, axes, maces, shields, all being delivered to the forge for repair and to restore them to battle ready status. Some were also busy cleaning up the streets, that is removing the bodies of the Berserkers and burning them, leaving nothing behind.

It's been three days since we liberated the Bog Burglars from Dagur's grip and we still haven't seen signs of an attack to take the village back. It's also been three days since I sent Ripper out to scout the Meathead tribe. I do hope that nothing dreadful has happened to him. Although, I have given myself a time limit; if he's not back by midnight tonight, I'll be heading to the Meathead tribe myself and see what has happened. If it is the worst case scenario, if he has been captured and if Drago has sent him more reinforcements, then we'll have to move up our attack to keep the pressure on him. I just hope the women here will be up for the attack in such notice.

"Astrid" a voice called me and I turned to see a long, blonde haired girl walking up to me. "Brenda, their smithy, said the weapons will be ready by the end of the night, and Bertha told me that they'd be more than happy to help with the attack." That was good news.

"Thanks Ruffnut" I replied, releasing a sigh as well.

"You know, it won't hurt to take a break" she said. I bet she saw stress written all over my face. I only got, at best, twenty hours of sleep in the past three days. "If you're our captain, we'll need you in top form...and that means getting some rest" she said, laying a hand on my shoulder. I looked to her and I could see the concern in her eyes. Apart from looking at me as a captain, she was also looking out for the well being of her close friend.

"Maybe you're right."

"Astrid, I may be an idiot sometimes, but I know what's best for people when it counts...so please take your rest. Bertha and Cami will take things from here, and don't worry about Ripper. Guy might have a big mouth but he knows when to keep it shut" she said with a chuckle, getting the same result from me.

"Alright, but keep me posted with any news, alright?" I said and turned to the house that we were staying in. Bertha offered it as our living quarters while we were based here. It also became our base of operations, and a place where we could get some rest. It was something I desperately needed right now. The only reason I involved myself with all the planning was to make sure people were on task. I guess I shouldn't be so worried, since Bertha and Ruff are taking charge for a while. I would be worried about Snotlout and Tuffnut but they seem to be staying on task. They were helping reconstruct the catapults with the help of the women and Hookfang, as well as rebuilding the ships.

I entered the house and closed the door behind me. It was a one-story house with two bedrooms, and the couch in the sitting area was my choice because I didn't want to fall asleep for too long. I propped my feet on one edge of the couch and laid my head back on one of the pillows I took from the bedroom and closed my eyes for a well deserved rest.

"Yes mom!" I heard as the door opened and shut, a breeze hitting me in the face as it happened. Well that nap lasted long.

"Oh...sorry, I didn't mean to wake you" the girl said and realized it was Cami who had just come.

"No, no. It's quite alright. I wasn't sleeping...yet" I muttered the last part.

"Sorry I interrupted your near rest..." guess she heard the last part, "but I was hoping to get to know you better" she said, pulling up a chair from the table and sitting across from me.

"Well there isn't much to know about me" I said, sitting upright on the couch now.

"Guess I was right about your modesty. I know you're best person when it comes to training Nadders, I know you are extremely skillful with an ax, and that you are Hiccup's betrothed."

"He hasn't proposed to me yet, so I wouldn't be stating that I'm betrothed to him."

"Technicalities, Astrid. They don't make a huge difference in the grand scheme of things. You think I don't know?" she asked.

"What would I expect you to know?" I asked, resting against the backboard of the couch.

"That you and Hiccup consummated" she said plainly, with a smile on her face. How does everyone know? I swear if the Twins or Snotlout went running their mouths I will... "Your silence confirms it" she said, breaking me from my train of thought. "I've seen you take a few herbs out of that satchel of yours and take them with water. And one day, being so close to you when taking it, I saw what it was, and came to the conclusion on what it was" she said with a smile.

Ok, I now we're supposed to be on the same side, but she is really starting to irritate me. Who does she think she is to point accusations...even though they're true...at me?

"How do you know I took a contraceptive?" I shot back, but then her smile grew its widest I'd ever seen and she arched her brow.

"I never said it was a contraceptive." I'd been played. This young woman has just tricked me into revealing personal information.

"You're quite the trickster aren't you?" I asked, crossing my arms over my chest and cocking an eyebrow.

"One of my many traits, second after being irresistibly beautiful" she smirked. "It was a long shot, but the arrow hit its mark. I was actually scared that that bluff wouldn't work, about you and Hiccup consummating or even if your silence confirmed it" she finished, looking under her nails. "So, how was it?"

"Me and Hiccup consummating?" she nodded. "That's private information."

"But I'm one of Hiccup's closest friends...besides, haven't you told a girl about this and I'm curious" she said.

"I'll just say it's one of the most memorable, amazing and intimate experiences a girl will ever have" I replied quickly, and didn't lace my voice with too much emotion, otherwise she would have continued with the personal questions.

"Not too chatty about it, aye?" she asked, a playful grin plastering her face.

"Well after my friends made bets about whether we did it or not, I don't know who to trust with that kind of information" I answered. "Besides, how do you know Hiccup so well?"

"Oh...I first met him when we were only about seven years old...he and his dad were visiting our tribe to discuss new trade routes. You should have seen him back then" she said, laughing to herself.

"I do remember how he was at that age...he was easily excited and was always trying to find out ways on how to capture dragons" I recalled. Even that age, he was always trying to help.

"Yeah well, while our parents went indoors to discuss business...it left me and Hiccup time to get acquainted with each other. It was the first time that he heard of our tribe and really didn't know what to go by other than the stories of us...and he told me I was nothing what he expected. He said he wasn't expecting someone funny, pretty and a great personality" she with a laugh.

I've got to remind Hiccup to tell me about Camicazi from his view as I would like to know his true thoughts about her...and all the other girls he met along his travels.

"It was quite the experience, given that we spent the whole day hunting for dragons, beyond the supervision of our parents, which as usual made them scared to the bone of what might have happened to us. We returned shortly before midnight to find the entire village looking for us. It was his dad's reaction to his actions that day that gave me an opening to his life...that he was always trying to live up to his father somehow. And it was as plain as day that he was smaller and weaker than your traditional Viking...but the determination in his eyes, what he told me...at that time I wouldn't have believed anyone who told me that his Hiccup would grow into the most successful Viking there had ever been, but I guess I was wrong" she said, looking down to the floor.

"We were all wrong about him" I said, not leaving myself or the others out of this. "When we were young, I always hoped he would stop being himself and try to become a true Viking. I stood on the sidelines and watched him try and fail countless of times, and I never even had the courage to walk up to him and give him a helping hand when he was shoved in the dirt by the others. When I look back upon those memories...it just makes me disappointed and angry at myself for not doing anything about it" I said, curling my hands into fists and looking at them. Everything turned alright in the end...but I can't help wonder what would have been the result if we, or I, treated him better.

"He had a tough life when he was young...but sometimes that's what helps forge a person into what he is today" she said.

"But by the way we treated him, base on those actions, he should have turned into someone like Alvin, or someone who has a hatred for Berk...and you don' know how much it hurts me to say that, but that is the truth as stories and legends have always told of a person turning against his own for revenge, to right the wrongs they did to him...and Hiccup was never close to that, except in one situation."

"Ah yes...Ruff told me about that night in Berk, where he did turn against all of you...because of some practical joke that Snotlout and the Twins pulled...how Drago used his twisted 'mind' skills to turn him against you" she said. But I wondered if she knew the whole story.

"She didn't tell you more?"

"No. Why, is there more behind it?" she asked.

"Yeah, when I confronted them in the forest, thinking that Hiccup would be in bed, I said some things about him...that I deserved

everything that happened to me after those words. I said that I would leave him because his face is scarred, that I only 'loved' him to have my family settled for life...I was so mad at Snotlout that I shouted any comment about Hiccup at him, and they weren't good ones at all...and Hiccup overheard all of them, and later in the village, he yelled at all of us, in fact, it was all his anger that he had been holding in for the rest of his earlier years that came out and it gave all of us something to think about...but I was too busy crying and asking Thor for forgiveness for what I said earlier" I said as I wiped a single tear near my cheek. It was one memory that I knew I would have trouble talking about.

"And I'm guessing when he saved you and a few others when he came back...that made you feel worse didn't it?"

"The pain he went through...the screams I heard, it was all to prevent me from marrying Drago, and it just showed me the loyalty and trust that he had in me, in Berk, and Drago kept reminding all of us to make us feel miserable about it, to show that we caused his pain...and he was right in more ways than you could imagine."

"But what happened after that? Did you guys make up or what? Or was it somewhere there that you and Hiccup took it to the next level?" she asked, a small sly smile. I let a smile graze my lips in memory of that incredible night.

"We did...in fact everyone apologized to him that day...we trained the dragons in that area to spell out a message for him, that we were sorry, and each of us gave him our most sincere apologies, about how sorry we were throughout his whole life. It was one of those moments where we all were starting anew...and we were extremely grateful that Hiccup forgave each and every one of us...I still find it amazing how he can forgive people so easily" I finished.

"But I don't believe it ended there, did it?" she pushed on. Might as well tell her since we're so far in this conversation.

"No, it didn't. Apparently Hiccup wanted to talk to me, to ask for my forgiveness for what he said and did to me before he flew away. He led me to a private cavern, where there would be no one able to see us, and it was there he asked. I told him he had every right to do what he did but he didn't forgive himself. I could see the pain in his eyes, the pain for what he did, and the pain of nearly driving me to commit suicide...he never meant it, but I forgave him. It was almost amusing to see the confusion on his face, and he asked me why I forgave him so easily."

"I told him that I did because he forgave people so easily, that he looked over passed events and focused on the present...I wanted to show him that he deserved it for all he's done...and being alone in a cavern, the moonlight dancing across the wall, reflected by the large pond in the middle of the cavern, fed by a stream entering the cavern...we let our emotions and lust take over, and thus we took our love to the next level" I finished.

"Wow..." was all she could say as she had that romantic smile grazing her lips, and seemed to be imagining that same scenario, possibly with her vision of the perfect man. Hopefully it wasn't Hiccup. "You two have been through a lot...more than any other couple I've known or met" she said, recovering her voice.

"But I'm not really surprised as he always did talk about you when we crossed paths in Atlaka" she spoke.

"You guys met again?" I asked.

"Oh yes...completely by chance that night. My mother and I were visiting a few friends in the city and I was wondering about in the streets when I did _run _into him" she said.

"Why were you running at night in the streets in the first place?"

"Oh...heh...I might have pissed off a few men about their swords and they weren't too pleased about that" she answered.

"Wait...why would men get pissed off about their swords?" I asked. It was pretty stupid, I mean the only person who should take offense to that is the blacksmith.

"Their _other _swords" she grinned sheepishly. That's when it hit me.

"Oh...yeah they would have taken complete offense to that" I said. No man would ever take a comment about their _sword _lightly.

"Anyway, they chased me and I ran right into Hiccup...and don't be mad, I asked him to pretend he was my boyfriend" she said quickly.

"What?" I asked in a low, deadly voice.

"I won't push on further...not now anyways. And you should ask Hiccup, since I think it might be better hearing it from him" she said quickly. Oh Thor, he'd have a lot of explaining to do when he got better, or the next time I see him which should be soon. "And please don't blame him, it was all me ok?" she asked again, and I simply nodded my head.

"Is there anything else you want to tell me?" I asked, crossing my leg over my knee and my hands over chest.

"Uh yes...I also do want to know where we stand in this war. Our position, next move...or what we have in store for us by joining you" she asked.

"You regret joining us?" seemed like she was having second thoughts.

"Oh Thor no. I just want to know what to expect...and I know for a fact there will be many more deaths for us, and I guess I'll know how to handle the broken emotions once this whole...war...is over, that's why I'm asking" she said.

I forgot the bigger picture of this war...there was going to be death, heartbreak, loss...emotions would be tested to the limit for each man and woman in this fight. The Bog Burglars are in good hands with their Chief Bertha, as well as in Cami after what I just heard. She would be an incredible Chief some day.

"You can expect us to attack the Meathead tribe once Ripper gets back, to destroy whatever forces of Drago's are there, possibly capture any high ranking officers and interrogate them, and keep moving forward from there. The main plan for _now _is to break Drago's hold of any villages to reduce his forces and his power" I told her.

"I feel there is more than that...something more than just capturing islands or destroying them...I think he's after something" she said, eyes wandering the to the door, but her mind deep in thought at the same time. "Something tangible..."

"Astrid!" Ruff said entering the house. "Ripper's back from his patrol and you will want to hear what he has to say" she said. Thank Odin he was back. It was nearly night out here, and I had feared the worst, but since he's back...and with valuable information...we could make our next step.

"Well let's go" I said getting off the couch and walking out with Cami and Ruff in tow. We met Ripper in the centre of the village with Snotlout and Tuff already there with him.

"Nice to see things are getting back on track here. Are we ready to attack?" he asked as we came up.

"Yeah, our women are ready to hand their arses back to those bilge rats" Cami said, resting her hand on her hip, back to her normal self.

"So what's the news Ripper? How large are their forces and did they send any reinforcements?" I got straight to the point.

"No, their forces are still ten ships. The reason I was gone for three days was because I posed as one of their soldiers and stayed there for three days. Didn't get much sleep, but there wasn't any talk of reinforcements. Weird since talk was spreading around of how we took back the Bog Burglar tribe" he said.

"They could be setting up a trap?" Snotlout suggested.

"No they're not. They weren't performing attack drills or anything like that" Ripper said.

"It doesn't make sense. They should be preparing for an attack. Are you sure they never mentioned anything about more ships or dragons coming in?" I asked again. I didn't want to lead anyone into an ambush.

"I am sure, so sure since I asked _every _man there about reinforcements...but there was one guy who came on a ship there and left today morning" he said.

"One of Drago's personal commanders?" Cami asked.

"No...but close. His dragon source" he said.

"What do you mean his dragon source?" Ruff asked.

"His number one dragon trapper...a guy called Eret, and by the sound and activity of his arrival and departure, he is a big deal" he

said.

"Did you happen to overhear where he was heading?" I asked.

"He's heading back to Atlaka to capture more dragons in the wild there. He should reach their docks in four days" he said. That might give us enough time to intercept him and capture him for interrogation.

"But what about the Meatheads? We can't just leave them" Snotlout said. He was right.

"Have they been performing executions or any other crime?" I asked.

"No, they lost men when the Berserkers first attacked, but have been left untouched in their cells" Ripper replied.

"Cami, are you alright with your women going in their without us?" I asked. I hated to leave them at such a stage, but Drago's number one dragon trapper was a prize we couldn't lose.

"Don't worry. We're more than capable of storming their island and slitting all of their throats. Bog Burglars are after-all known for the stealth and sneak attacks" she said with a grin. Perfect.

"Alright guys, Ripper, lead us in the direction that his ship left and we'll try and cut him off before he reaches Atlaka. Cami, I wish you and your mother all the luck that Odin has to offer in your attack. I am terribly sorry that we have to leave you at such a crucial time" I said, clasping her shoulder.

"Don't worry about it. You have a bigger catch in sight and I would loathe you if you let it swim away" she returned the smile. With our final goodbyes, we took off into the night in search of Eret's ship. And if we were to find him in the night, that would definitely increase our chances of surprise and spell a quick victory.

* * *

><p>"What's the status of our course!"<p>

"We should meet the rest of the fleet in an hour, sir!" a deckhand shouted back. It was another pitch black night on the seas of the Archipelago. The _Phantom _was right on course to its escorts waiting for her.

"Eret!" a voice called and the young, handsome and accomplished man looked to see his first mate walking up the stairs.

"Ah, Herjolf" he said, clasping his elbow and Herjolf returning the same gesture. "What news do you have of the dragons below?" he asked. They had just captured a few stray dragons from the Meathead tribe and were bringing them to Atlaka, where one of Drago's buyers would purchase them and bring them to him.

"They're doing well...still a bit grumpy about their current accommodations, but have settled down enough to not cause the ship to rock anymore" he informed him.

"Good to hear. Hopefully they're worth the coin to Drago" Eret said, gazing back out ahead of him.

"I'm sure they are, since Drago has been losing land and dragons in recent circumstances" Herjolf replied, following Eret's gaze.

"Ah yes, the rebels or Dragon Riders as everyone is calling them now...pity we Vikings can't come with more creative names" he said with a chuckle, even earning one from his first mate.

"Should we worry about them?" he asked his captain.

"With the Bog Burglars liberated, their next target would be the Meathead Clan, which is over fifteen hours behind us, so I'm not too worried about them" he said, leaning against the railing of the captain's deck.

"Maybe we should still prepare the ship and the escorts for any fight that might befall us" Herjolf suggested.

"Alright Herjolf...as soon as we see the others, we'll send a message over telling them to ready the traps" he said.

"Traps sir?"

"Yes, traps. These are the infamous Dragon Riders that have caused Drago problems, meaning their dragons would fetch me an extremely pretty price when I sell them to him" he said with a smug smile.

"And what about the riders?"

"I'll let Drago decide what to do with them...as long as I get paid for bringing him dragons, my business with him is gold...maybe he might even pay a bit extra for bringing the riders as well...all I can do is hope now" he said.

"Do you think we'll shoot it down?" Herjolf asked.

"Shoot what down, Herjolf?"

"The Night Fury...imagine the praise and celebration among the men if you, Eret, the greatest Dragon Trapper in the world were to capture a Night Fury!" he exclaimed, the joy and wonder in his eyes reflecting the light of the stars.

"Haha...that would be my greatest accomplishment...shooting down the infamous Night Fury...the first Viking to ever achieve such a feat!" he yelled, shooting his hand up in the air with a curved fist.

* * *

><p>Astrid's POV - 15 Hours Later

"Ripper, we've been flying for fifteen hours with only two thirty minute stops, how much farther till we see Eret's ship?" Snotlout asked. We were all exhausted from flying through the night and we weren't sure if we were any closer to finding Eret.

"I'm sorry if it's taking so long princess, but Eret was heading in a south-easterly direction, and that could be a wide span of ocean to cover" Ripper shot back. I could sense the irritation in his voice. The Twins and Snotlout's energy was running thin the longer it took us to find him as they wanted to be in a fight, not spending the whole night and early morning hours searching for one.

"Snotlout, Ripper said we are heading in the right direction and it _will_ take time to find his ship, so please cut him some slack!" I defended Ripper. He was, after all, the person who had information on this Eret.

"Fine! But if we don't find something to smash or blow up in the next thirty minutes, Hookfang will do that to me...you know how he gets when his inner warrior is caged up!" he said, and in response Hookfang did a fast barrel roll, causing Snotlout to nearly lose his small breakfast.

"Oh that will be a welcome sight" Ripper said with a smile.

"Knock it off you two...I think I've spotted something in the distance" I said, seeing a spec of brown and what looked like to be sails. "Ripper, can you get a closer look?" I asked him.

"With pleasure" he said and shot off into the clouds above us, heading to the ship.

"Uh...why are you sending the largest dragon for a recon mission?" Tuff asked as we stopped the dragons.

"Because it's cloudy and Razorcut has shown he has admirable stealth skills. Besides, he doesn't need to get too close to see them" I replied. We waited for about twenty minutes till Ripper returned.

"Ok, so there are six ships in total..."

"Wait, I thought Astrid said there was only one?" Ruff said.

"They're travelling in close quarters, that's why it seemed like one spec, but there is one huge ship and four smaller ships" he reported.

"How big is the main ship?" I asked.

"_Incredibly_ huge. It's twice the size of the _Striker_" he said. Our eyes widened immediately. The _Striker_ was Berk's biggest ship by far. At fifty feet long and twenty feet high, we thought it was an excellent ship in terms of size and power. But to learn the other ship that Ripper had just seen must have been over one hundred feet and forty feet high...we were in for a heck of a challenge.

"What about the other four smaller ships?" I asked.

"They're a bit smaller than the _Striker_, _most_ likely ten feet less in length and five feet less in height" he replied.

"Okay, so what's the plan?" Snotlout asked.

"We have to take them by surprise, we can't all attack at once" I started.

"I can go first. Charge right in. Razorcut was made for frontal assaults anyway" Ripper said with a smile, patting his dragon's enormous head.

"Alright, Ripper will take the front door approach. Snotlout, Ruff, Tuff, I need you guys to attack from the sides. We need to take out the smaller ships first before we focus on the main target, got it?" I asked.

"What about you?" Ruff asked.

"I'll be attacking from the top. They shouldn't see me coming. Any other questions?" they all shook their heads. This was it.

"Alright then, let's go catch a Dragon Trapper" I said, and we all went our separate ways.

* * *

><p>"Sir, you might want to see this" Herjolf said, handing Eret a spyglass. He took the device and looked at the general area where Herjolf pointed and saw a Whispering Death heading right for them.<p>

"Well...I guess they found us" he said, handing back the spyglass, and walking to the front of the captain's deck.

"They sir?" Herjolf asked.

"There are obviously more than one Dragon Rider. They just split up and will attack from the sides and the top" Eret said.

"How do you know this?"

"It's what I'd do" he replied to his first mate, standing before the railing, looking down at his men who were hard at work preparing the ship for battle. "Alright everyone, listen up!" he yelled. All the men stopped what they were doing to pay attention to their captain. "It appears the Dragon Riders have found us" as soon as he said that, murmurs began spreading through the men like wildfire.

"I know you all heard what they have done and what they can do...but don't worry. We are on the _Phantom, _a ship infamous for trapping dragons that attacked her, and more than capable of holding off a few dragon riders who think they can defy Drago. Their dragons are well bred for battle, and will fetch an even more handsome price with Drago if we capture them. So make sure you don't harm them extensively. Now to your stations and prepare for the fight!" he yelled, and his men yelled back shouts of victory and enthusiasm, and proceeded with twice the speed and efficiency of getting everything ready before the dragon arrived.

"A Whispering Death is a fine catch any day, don't you agree Herjolf?" Eret asked as he watched the dragon fly closer by the second.

"Aye sir, but difficult to capture nonetheless" he said.

"Not for me" Eret said with a smile.

* * *

><p>Normal POV

"Alright Razorcut, here we go!" Ripper yelled as he was met with a barrage of arrows and bolas, all missing their mark as Razorcut easily managed to avoid the projectiles with surprising grace. "Dive, dive, dive!" Ripper yelled and Razorcut did just that, diving below the surface of the water, away from the eyes of the men aboard the ships.

"Keep alert men!" Eret yelled, looking over the sides. That rider couldn't hold his breath for long.

"Hookfang, annihilate!" he heard a voice yell and he looked to his left to see a Monstrous Nightmare come in hot and shot one of the escorts right through its middle, and it soon started taking on water. Men were already abandoning ship. "Snotlout, Snotlout, Oi Oi Oi!" he heard the rider on the Nightmare yell, pumping his fist in the air.

"Barf, let'em have it!" he heard a girl's voice and looked to his right to see a Hideous Zippleback with a rider on each head. One of the heads was already spewing its gas onto two of the escorts but he had planned for this.

"Now!" he yelled and the lead escort, in front of the rest of the ships fired three bolas, all hitting their mark on the Zippleback, tying both of the necks together, and the wings as well. The direction of the shot also had Barf and Belch land right onto the deck of the Phantom. The men aboard soon moved in, their aim to subdue the dragon and take it below decks. Ruff and Tuff were thrown off Barf and Belch and onto the deck of the ship. They immediately unsheathed their spear and mace respectively and ran in to defend their dragon.

Oh no Astrid thought as she came in and shot a few spikes at the men aboard the Phantom. Some hit their mark while the main effect was to push them back from Barf and Belch. "Ruff, Tuff, cut them lose quick!" she yelled as she avoided a bola aimed at Stormfly.

But right at that moment, when Snotlout was coming to take out the one of the escorts on the sides, he wasn't prepared for four bolas and a net that was fired at him. Hookfang's wings, and legs were caught in the bolas while a chain-metal net enveloped him, and the two crashed right onto the deck of the Phantom.

"Get me out of here so I can really give your arses a whooping!" he yelled, trying to tear the chain-metal apart but it was no use. The Twins, for a brief second tried to cut break it, but their weapons were useless, and they were soon subdued by the men on the deck, pulling them down and tying them up.

Astrid did another run, this time hitting many of the dragon traps along the railings of the escorts. She looked to see Snotlout and the Twins trapped aboard, she assumed, Eret's ship. This was guy was smarter than she gave credit for. By capturing Hookfang in a

chain-metal net he wouldn't be able to burn through it like normal.

"Herjolf, aim for the Nadder!" Eret yelled and four cannons aboard the _Phantom_ shot bolas and ropes designed to hook around the legs or wings or neck and reel them back in. One of the ropes tied itself around Stormfly's leg, causing a large jerk that nearly threw Astrid off her, but she managed to just hold on.

"Fire!" Eret yelled, and two cannons fired ropes that tied around the other leg and her neck, and began to pull her in. At that moment a tail broke the surface of the water and ran across one of the decks of the escorts, effectively killing or throwing everyone off the ship and destroying the weapons as well. A few seconds later Razorcut burst through the centre of the ship, breaking it in two...but the _Phantom_ and the three remaining escorts were ready for them.

"Fire!" Eret yelled again, and this time huge cannons with chains instead of rope were fired and wrapped themselves around Razorcut's tail and some around his huge head.

Stormfly was losing energy and fast. There were five ropes holding her down. She had already burned through six of those ropes but more were fired around her and she was tiring. More men were pulling on the ropes, bringing her to the deck, and Astrid couldn't help but watch Ripper and Razorcut struggle through the metal chains that were bringing them in...and more were being fired from the _Phantom._

"Stormfly eventually succumbed to her ordeal and fell to the deck with a huge thud and Astrid jumped clear, the roll she put in absorbing most of the energy from her fall, but she was immediately subdued by the men who quickly tied her up.

It wasn't long until Razorcut and Ripper also crashed down onto the deck, the Whispering Death not able to break through the twelve metal chains tied around him and Ripper was soon tied up as well, and put with the rest of his companions, in front of their dragons. The men aboard the _Phantom_ and three remaining escorts were yelling with pride and joy, that they were able to defeat the mighty Dragon Riders.

"They were clearly prepared" Ripper said, ignoring the shouts of joy.

"I hate to admit it...but that Eret really knows what he's doing" Snotlout said, still trapped in the net with Hookfang.

"I'm sorry guys...this is all my fault" Astrid said, hanging her head low in shame.

"No it's not...you didn't know that he would have been prepared...or this good" Ripper tried to relieve the stress off her.

"But I should have! I should have assumed those scenarios...if I did...we wouldn't be in this mess" she said, directing her gaze forward as the men had stopped cheering and were quiet now. The five of them soon heard steps walking towards them and when one man made his way out of the crowd, they couldn't believe their

eyes.

"Well...isn't this an honour? The mighty Dragon Riders, captured at my hand...and I specialize in capturing dragons" he said, and his men laughed.

"So, you must be Eret" Astrid said, staring at the man. She was expecting someone in their mid forties, ugly and bitter. Not someone young, devilishly handsome and incredibly fit.

"Wow...I never knew the leader was a Divine Beauty" he said, his tone changing from humourous to flirtatious, kneeling down before her. But Astrid wasn't having any of it.

"Sorry Eret, I'm already spoken for" she said with a smile. Eret just walked behind her and saw no ring on her finger.

"But I don't see a ring. Surely that doesn't mean you belong to someone. Besides, if you join me, I won't give you up to Drago" he said, resting his palm on her shoulder. _At least he isn't like the other men who would cup my cheek _she thought. She roughly rolled her shoulder to remove his hand.

"Like I said Eret, I'm spoken for" she said more strongly this time.

"(sigh) Alright...but the offer is still open" he said with a wink before getting up. "So, what should I do with you all?" he pondered the question. "Your dragons are the real trophies here. Drago would pay a chest full of gold and gems to have them...heck even more so if you were part of the sale" he said.

"You're heading to Atlaka, correct?" Astrid asked.

"Why of course my dear. Is that where you're betrothed is?" he asked.

"No...we want to know where you're heading so we can capture you" Ripper said with a small smile. Eret and his men laughed at the statement.

"Capture us? And how well is that working for you now?" he asked, stopping before the them.

"We're in a slight jam but nothing our friends won't get us out of...powerful friends at that" Ripper added.

"And who might these powerful friends be?" Eret asked, raising an eyebrow and a smile grazing his lip.

"Her boyfriend" Ripper gestured with his head to Astrid.

"Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third, heir to the Hairy Hooligan Tribe of Berk" she said his status proudly.

"Last time I heard Drago, Dagur and Alvin beat him to death" he said.

"Oh he's still very much alive" Tuff answered.

"Okay, but I do know how severe his injuries were, so since he's not here, he's most likely recovering from them still" Eret said. Astrid cursed under her breath. This talk would stall him but for how long. And she didn't even know if help was coming or not...heck most likely not since no one knew where they were.

"He'll find us...you can count on that" Snotlout said.

"Really, does he even know where you are?" he asked, resting his hand on his hip.

"Nope..." Astrid answered with a smile. She was smiling as she saw a figure coming for them behind Eret "...but she does" she gestured with her eyes in the direction she was looking. Eret looked back and immediately regretted the site. Coming right at him was Stormcutter*. This huge dragon was one of the rarest and tricky to catch. It's four wings gave it remarkable agility and its size also gave Eret worry, for a Stormcutter was always confident in its fights and it usually won all of them. This was in fact the second time he saw _this _Stormcutter since he did try and catch it. Guess he would have a second chance.

But that feeling was short lived when a Thunderdrum broke the surface of the water and let out its roar, knocking all the men in its path into the water. Eret, for the first time, was caught by surprise as soon the massive Stormcutter was above him and landed on the deck of his ship, in front of his prisoners and their dragons. The Thunderdrum landed on the captain's deck, its roar at the ready if anyone did something it didn't like.

"Eret" the figure getting off the Stormcutter spoke "it's been a long time."

"Ah, Valka. I was wondering where you retreated to" he said, regaining his composure after that sudden attack. "What do you think you're doing on my ship?" he asked.

"Oh, I came to rescue them" she gestured to the young adults behind her.

"Really? You came all by yourself, excluding the two dragons, to save them?" he asked, smiling as he asked the question. "That's not the Valka I remember" he said.

"Yes, well, my backup is a little late" she said.

"Oh really now...and where is this backup?" he asked. But in the next five seconds, he heard a sound that would have made any sane Viking dive for cover. That screeching sound in the sky was followed by the sight of six purple blasts, each escort getting hit by two shots right in the centre which split the ships in half. The survivors quickly grabbed onto any floating debris that was present. Soon a black object zoomed past them above the _Phantom _and did a round, before landing on the ship.

"Ow...okay, have to take it a bit more easy" a voice said. Eret and his men saw a figure dressed in black leather armour get off the...Night Fury. "Nice job Toothless" the masked man said, giving the dragon a rub on its head.

"How did you know we were going to be here?" Tuff asked.

"Oh, we received your message and were on our way to the Meathead Clan to help support the attack, but we ran into this" the figure said, taking off his helmet and straightening out some of his hair.

"Who are you?" Herjolf asked, wondering where and whom this young man was and how he could tame a Night Fury.

"My name is Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third" he stated simply. Eret looked back from Hiccup to Astrid about five times.

"_He _is your boyfriend?" he asked, pointing to Hiccup. Said man just looked a tad confused and looked between Eret and Astrid.

"Yep" Astrid said with a proud smile.

"Uh...not to ruin the moment, but we're still trapped here!" Snotlout yelled.

"Fine, Toothless keep watch" Hiccup said. Valka followed her son in untying their friends and Cloudjumper used his razor sharp talons to break the chain mail net and break the chains that were holding Razorcut down. Astrid immediately hugged Hiccup once he untied her. He did hiss at some of the pain that emanated from his abdomen and chest but he returned the hug in a few seconds.

"What are you doing here!? You're supposed to be resting!" she yelled at him, happy that he was here but mad that he put himself in danger once again.

"I told him that he couldn't come once I received your message, but as always he didn't listen. His stubbornness is from his father, not me" Valka said as she joined the two. "Plus there was no point in telling him to go back once I knew he was following me" she said.

"What?! How did you know I was following you?" Hiccup asked. He made sure to fly at a safe distance away from her.

"Because dear, Cloudjumper could sense Toothless behind him, and given his behaviour, I knew you were behind me, but I didn't bother try to convince you then" she said.

"So, what should we do with them?" Ripper asked, rubbing his wrists where the ropes were.

"Well they are at our mercy now" Astrid said, looking at all the men who were being corralled into the centre of the deck.

"Well, we are fifteen hours away from the Meathead Clan, why not head there?" Eret suggested.

"He's right. Cami and the Bog Burglars must have them under control now and would have freed the prisoners" Ripper said. This bit of news brought a shocked look to Eret's face, but he quickly suppressed it. However, he wasn't fast enough to avoid being spotted by Astrid.

"You didn't think we had less of a plan than this did you?" she asked with a smile.

"Either way, just to make sure, Astrid and I will fly to check up on their status while you guys turn this ship around and set sail for the Meathead Clan" Hiccup said, getting back on Toothless as Astrid got in Stormfly.

"Wait, why do you two get to leave?" Tuff asked.

"Because we need all the bigger and stronger dragons to make sure these men don't try anything they'll regret" Valka answered. The dragons backed her point by staring at each and every man on deck.

"We'll see you guys on land" Hiccup said, before he and Astrid took off.

* * *

><p>Stormcutter* - That's the type of dragon Cloudjumper is called.

33. What Did I Tell You?

_Normal POV _

Valka and the young adults watched Hiccup and Astrid disappear into the clouds, on their way to the Meathead Clan to check on the status of the attack. "Alright everyone, I know you can ride dragons well, but can you all sail a ship?" she asked, walking up the stairs to the captain's deck.

"Are you kidding, we only started using dragons five years ago. Till then we were masters of sailing" Snotlout boasted from the deck.

"Still the same as I remember you, Snotlout" Valka said with a laugh. "Still as boastful, arrogant and possibly reckless as you ever were" she said, grasping the captain's wheel.

"Thanks...I think" he replied.

"You know she just insulted you right?" Eret asked, him and his men in the centre of the deck, under the watch of Cloudjumper, Razorcut, Hookfang and Barf and Belch.

"Please...he can't even tell the difference from left to right" Ripper commented, meeting Valka on the captain's deck.

"Oh please...this is my left and this is my right" he said, starting with his right hand first. "Wait...no it's the other way...no...I was right the first time" Ripper left him to handle out his situation.

"How is his recovery?" he asked Valka. Flying was a huge risk, given his condition.

"He's making steady progress. He was healing for three weeks before

he woke up, so we have to take that into account...plus he was fit enough to consummate, so I'd say he's making wonderful progress" she said with a smile.

"Too stubborn for his own good" he replied, laughing a bit as well. "So, have you ever sailed a ship like this before?" he asked her.

"I've been flying dragons for the past fifteen years...I wouldn't entrust this ship's fate to me" she said.

"If you want to head back, why not let me steer the ship?" Eret asked from the deck below.

"Because we don't trust you...that's why" Ripper yelled.

"It's not like I'll be in a position of power. Your dragons are here to make sure nothing goes wrong...plus I wouldn't turn these weapons in my direction for anything. So, what do you say?" he asked. Ripper and Valka looked skeptically at each other.

"We'll manage" Ripper said, ending the conversation there for now. Eret just sighed in annoyance. He didn't know why these Vikings wouldn't trust him. Sure he captured dragons, but he never harmed them...otherwise they would be of no use to the highest bidder, and Drago was said bidder. He needed dragons in top, fighting form, and that's what Eret specialized in doing. He didn't care what Drago was using them for, although he had a pretty good suspicion, but if he held up his end of the bargain and paid him handsomely, then there were no problems between the two.

"Do you have a brig on the ship?" Valka asked.

"No...the whole lower deck is catered towards housing dragons, and there are about five of them below deck right now" he said, not looking at them.

"And you expect us to go below deck and be caught in one of your traps?" Snotlout asked.

"Why would I arm traps on my own ship?" Eret asked, looking at Snotlout as if he didn't think through things.

"In the case a group like us stormed it and took you captive!" Tuff yelled, his sister looking at him unimpressed.

"Considering this is a first time I've been boarded, no there aren't any...but thank you for the tip" Eret said with a smile.

"He has no reason to lie anymore...I'll go down and check" Ripper said, opening one of the doors that led below deck. While he did that, Valka managed to get the ship in the opposite direction and made course for the Meathead Clan.

"Your son looks a lot like you Valka...I just realized that" Eret started, his goal to start a conversation since there was him or his men could do, being under the watch of angry dragons and all that.

"Well, aren't you sharp" she commented, staring out at the

horizon.

"I'm serious...same eyes, same build, sharp and has a way with dragons just like you...by the way, how did he get a Night Fury?" he asked. He thought Drago was the only person in this lifetime, possibly world, who had a Night Fury.

"Toothless? Oh, he shot him down when he was fifteen" she said, and tried not to laugh at Eret's and his men's facial expressions.

"He...your son...that boy...shot down a Night Fury? The fastest dragon out there?" he asked. He could scarcely believe that the boy he saw, five or four years ago...shot down a Night Fury!

"Yes he did...I'm sure you would have noticed that red tail fin on Toothless?" she asked and he nodded in reply. "Well, when he shot him, the bola ripped off that tail fin and he crashed landed in the forests of Berk. My son freed him and later discovered the dragon trapped in a cove, unable to fly because it lost a wing. So, being a smithy, he made a new tail for him, and thus they began to bond and train" she gave the short version.

"And here I was thinking I'd catch the infamous Night Fury...when five years ago someone already did...a boy nonetheless" Eret said, sounding dejected.

"He is not a _boy _anymore, Eret...as you've seen what he's capable of" Valka defended her son.

"And the girl...Astrid, she and your son are an item?" he asked.

"I believe you already had your answer when she told you" Valka replied, getting bored of this conversation.

"But how...I mean...why him of all people?"

"They have been through a lot, Eret. More than you think a couple could go through in this world...and they're still going strong. If you truly want to know, how about you ask one of them? Because I cannot convey the story with the emotions that they went through" she answered and walked over to her dragon, effectively ending the conversation.

"It's true...five dragons down in the hold, two Nadders, a Monstrous Nightmare, a Rumblehorn and a Scauldron" Ripper said walking back onto the deck.

"Are they alright?" Valka asked.

"They're fine. I managed to calm them down, show them I'm on their side and they complied" he said.

"That's good. Snotlout, Tuffnut, you two are with me. We'll go down and release them" she said, walking down the stairs and through the doors that led to the hold, followed by the two of them.

"Ripper, is it?" Eret asked, making sure of the person he wanted to talk to. His question was confirmed when he turned in his direction.

"Yes, what do you want?" he asked.

"Are you close friends with Hiccup?"

"Lived with him and trained him for two years...we've grown as close as brothers could be" he answered.

"Then tell me this, what makes him..._him_. He doesn't seem to be credited with many skills, and how on Midguard did he get that Divine Beauty by his side" he asked. Ripper was not amused at all at the question or the small grin Eret was giving him.

"Is there anything on your mind besides Astrid?" he asked. He was getting annoyed at the fact that Eret wouldn't drop the that topic. "Or is stealing someone else's girl always on your mind?"

"I don't look to steal them, okay?"

"Oh no...you just get close to them, woo them, and have them fall for your charm and good looks...well sorry to inform you that Astrid is not that type of girl" Ripper replied.

"Seems I overstepped. I'm sorry, okay? I just don't see why you think of me like that" he said, shifting his gaze. "I just wanted to know how he got her."

"What I don't get is why someone like yourself is being tied down by one girl. Finally know what it feels like to be on the other end huh?" Ripper said.

"Something like that, but honestly, she is one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen...has to be a Valkyrie in mind, but how did they end up together?"

"Why is it so important to you?"

"We have over half a day until we reach the Meathead Clan, and what better way to pass the time than to strike up a conversation?" Eret suggested.

"Honestly, I think it will be better if you heard the story from Hiccup or Astrid" Ripper said.

"It's not that we don't want to tell you, it's just that you'll not understand it if you hear it from us" Ruff said, who was eavesdropping on the conversation and decided to step in.

"And you are?" Eret asked.

"Ruffnut Thorston, and the other guy with long blonde hair is my twin, Tuffnut. And I'm best friends with Astrid and a master of the Hideous Zippleback" she said with a proud smile, crossing her arms over her chest.

"Okay, if you guys aren't going to tell me about how they got together, how about Hiccup's training...he doesn't seem like the guy who can wield a sword, or ax for that matter" Eret said.

"He was at first, but a year after being the first Viking to train a

dragon, he had to be learn the duties of being a Chief. After learning under his father, he had to further his skills, especially his fighting. Stoick and the counsel decided it would be best to send him to Atlaka; to learn under the best of the best. I volunteered to be at his side throughout the whole trip. We didn't know how long it would take, or when we'd come back. It was during that time, I became close to Hiccup. I saw who he really was. I already had an idea of the person he was, and had the experience as well...but it was during those two years that I saw a completely different Hiccup...how he morphed into the person he is today, still retaining a bit of his old self...and it's through that, that I know he will be the best Chief Berk has ever seen" Ripper said with a smile, glancing to Eret.

"I...heard about how he defeated the Red Death single handed...I'm guessing that's how he lost his left foot" Eret commented.

"Something like that, but you didn't hear all of it...when Hiccup lured the Queen into that dive and when it was too late for her to pull out, she crashed and had exploded, and Hiccup and Toothless were trying to escape the flames. They would have if it wasn't for that club like tail. They crashed into it, Hiccup knocked off Toothless and plunging into the fires below. Toothless turned back and went for him, but to grab him and get him away from the flames, Toothless had to catch him by his leg...and he had to use his teeth..." he stopped there.

"You can already see the picture" Ruff finished for him.

"Toothless saved his life, given it cost him his leg...but Hiccup understood. Took a while for him to get used to the new prosthetic, but nothing that his friends, family and dragon couldn't help with" he finished.

For someone like Eret, it was a lot to take in. He knew that certain people had bonds with their dragons, like Valka and Cloudjumper, but the bond between Toothless and Hiccup was something he never heard of.

"But if you want to hear about his relationship with Astrid, then you'd better ask him when we reach the Clan" Ripper said, turning to walk away.

"Wait!" Eret called back. Ripper stopped and slowly turned around, arching an eyebrow.

"I...Dragon Trapping is the only thing I'm really good at...I'd say the best, personally, but do you know why I do it?" he asked. Ripper and Ruffnut both shook their heads.

"I do it, and this will sound low, for the gold...because I have nothing else to fight for. Hiccup, he has a family, a tribe, and girl to fight for...heck he's been thrown into the fight and will fight to the death if he has to, I can tell that...but me...I have nothing. I grew up in an orphanage, they told me my parents were killed in a dragon raid one day, and I vowed that I would be the best Dragon Trapper there was that day...but now, I don't know where to go. I capture dragons for Drago because if I don't he will hunt me down as well. I'm his main source of dragons and he will come after me to

make sure his supply is not threatened. Saying that, you do know what you're in for right?"

"That's why we came here in the first place, to capture you and piss him off" Ripper said.

"But keep going on how you have nothing to fight for" Ruffnut said.

"Yes well...I might be a Dragon Trapper, but I have some sense of honour, even though that side has never shown itself. If you protect me, I can help you defeat Drago" he said.

Ripper and Ruff both looked at each other and then back at Eret. "We'll have to tell Valka about this, see what she thinks" Ripper told Ruff.

"I am telling the truth guys...just give me a chance" he begged.

"That's not for us to decide" Ruff said, before she and Ripper turned to see Valka, Snotlout and Tuffnut walking from the hold.

"The dragons don't have to worry about the chains anymore. Get everyone cleared off the main deck so we can release them" Valka ordered. With that, Ripper and Ruffnut gestured to Eret and his men to walk up to the captain's deck, under the watchful eyes of the dragons. Valka then pulled a lever that split the main deck in two, and opening outwards. As soon as the two massive doors opened, all the five dragons broke free into the morning sky, performing a few spins and loops, ecstatic that they were free from their confinement.

Meanwhile... (5 Hours Later)_

"You do not understand the level of stupidity you just reached in coming out here in your condition!" Astrid lectured as they were flying. The pair have been locked in this argument for three of the five hours that had gone by.

"Well if I didn't, and I hate to state this at you, you all would still be on his ship tied up" Hiccup reasoned at a more calmer tone than his counterpart.

"Your mother arrived. She and Cloudjumper could have easily taken them on by themselves...with Thornado!" she pointed out.

"My mother only landed on that ship because she knew I was following her, and that I would take care of those three remaining ships! There was no guarantee that she would have been able to free all of you and take down those ships" he said.

"Are you doubting your mother's skills?"

"I'm not doubting anything...Look I was in a deep sleep for three weeks and then sitting around for an extra week...you know as well as any other healer that my body was recovering during those four weeks. I could easily get up and walk around. I was sick and tired of being cooped up with nothing to do...I wanted to get back in action" he said.

"And what _if _something happened, huh? What if you got hurt? What if your wound has reopened? For all we know, you might be bleeding internally!" she pressured.

"Am I dead yet, Astrid?"

"Not _yet_" she yelled back, and that's when he saw the hurt in her eyes. She was expecting him to stay back and make a full recovery, or at least give them/her a heads-up of when he'd be flying again. Even though he didn't promise anything, he knew the trust she had for him, and he threw that trust, the trust where he would stay safe and heal, away.

She turned her head away from him, in the other direction, not wanting him to see the two tears escaping her eyes.

"Astrid...I'm sorry" he said with all the guilt he felt evident in it.

"Sorry, won't be enough the next time you...The only reason you took them by surprise was because your mother distracted them. Otherwise...they would have been able to shoot Toothless. If they were able to capture Stormfly, Eret had the skills to catch Toothless" she spoke softly. "I know you better than everyone Hiccup...and that is why I always worry for you. Sometimes you do the most idiotic plays that...I'm astounded you're still _alive_" she said, this time meeting his gaze.

"It seems to me that you're hiding more pain behind here" he said calmly. His assumption was confirmed when she turned away again.

"You're right...there is more pain...the pain of losing you again, the third time if you're wondering" she said.

"Astrid, you know I'm not going anywhere..."

"We're coming up on their tribe" she said harshly. Hiccup focused on the horizon in front of him and saw that she was right. However, this conversation wasn't close to being over.

"Looks like the Bog Burglars have done their job" he commented, as they the remaining Berserker ships burning and sinking as well. The pair flew their dragons right into the village, where the women were helping the villagers from their imprisonments. There were a few shouts of fear, seeing the two dragons, thinking that Drago was coming, but that turned into sighs of relief and a few cheers, seeing that it was Hiccup and Astrid. The pair landed in the village centre and were soon swarmed by the men, women and children of the village, thanking them for coming.

"Guess I need a dragon around here to get attention" they heard a voice and saw Cami making her way through the now dissipating crowd.

"Cami!" Hiccup exclaimed.

"How'd that fishing trip?" she asked.

"Oh, we caught him, with a little unasked help" Astrid said, gesturing to Hiccup, a not amused look on her face. Hiccup simply scratched his neck, looking to the ground, not wanting to make eye contact with her. Cami could sense the tension between the two. They were radiating stress and anger like the stench of her mother's boots when she had to air them.

"Okay...anyway, you can see we have everything under control. We've killed all the Berserkers here and laid waste to their ten ships, and are almost done taking care of the villagers" she said.

"Were there any problems with dragons?" Hiccup asked.

"Surprisingly there weren't any. Made our job easier, and before you ask, we didn't ask the Berserkers, my women had a kill first, ask questions later order, courtesy of moi" she said, giving a small bow as well.

"What about Thuggory?"

"Oh, he's in recovery as we speak."

"Is it bad?" he asked.

"Just a few cuts and scrapes here and there, a sprained wrist and a few bruised ribs...nothing he'll say he can't handle" she said with a smile. "Do you want to go see him?"

"Yes, and don't worry, I know where the healer's bay is" he said, trudging off to said place with Toothless on his heels, but still in view of them.

"So, what's got your leggings in a twist?" Cami immediately asked as soon as Hiccup was out of ear-shot.

"Oh it's h...Hiccup!" she suddenly yelled and ran past Cami who looked bewildered. But as she turned around she saw Hiccup on his knees, clutching his abdomen and Toothless crooning next to him, concerned for his rider. She followed after Astrid, who was now at Hiccup's side, and only then did she see what was wrong. There was a blood stain on his leather armour, and it was growing. Without hesitation, the two of them got underneath him, hooking an arm over their shoulders and holding him at his waist, began to take him to the healer's.

"Do I have to say it!?" Astrid asked, a question Cami knew was directed at Hiccup...and probably knowing why she was angry at him.

"How about we get him to the healer, and then a couple's counselor later?" Cami suggested but was shot a death-glare from Astrid. The two came withing sight of the healer's and a few of the Bog Burglar women and villagers in front, rushed over to help them.

"He's a priority case. Find out what's wrong!" Cami said as they handed him off to be taken inside.

"I should be there with him" Astrid said, preparing to walk in, but her arm was snagged by Cami.

"Let the healers do their job. They'll inform us when we can go in and see him. Until then, mind filling me about what happened?" she asked.

"We were on Eret's trail when we found him with five other smaller ships...escorts by the look of it. We attacked them, coming from the front, sides and above but he was prepared for us. Our dragons were captured and we were tied up on the main ship's deck. That's when we saw Valka, Hiccup's long lost mother, come in, dodging a few arrows and nets, and Thornado, Hiccup's father's dragon, also came and knocked off a few soldiers as well. However, Valka landed on the ship, and she and Eret engaged in a small conversation. All of us were wondering why. But then she mentioned she had backup and that's when Hiccup came on Toothless and shot the three remaining ships...the ones we weren't able to take out earlier. And he was under strict orders to not join us" she told her.

"Was he hit by anything?"

"No. It's most likely he's reopened one of his wounds. That was why I was mad at him for coming...he's supposed to be recovering" said Astrid.

"Well, you know men...they don't listen to a single thing spoken to them...Hiccup especially" Cami said.

"That's what concerns me the most" Astrid said, not taking the sentence as a witty comment, but seriously.

"Look Astrid, I don't know a lot about you, but I can tell you're one of those people who don't like to sit around when people are fighting a war out there. Hiccup, to some extent, could be the same" she reasoned.

"But I will stay put when I know I'm recovering from serious injuries" I said, however was met with a blank stare which meant she did not believe me. "To a certain extent I will stay put" I reworded my sentence. She was right that I would _hate _to sit about while my friends and people were out in the battlefield fighting for the cause, even if it was to recover from my injuries, but Hiccup did something that was completely unexpected and in a situation where anything could have happened.

"That's the same case with Hiccup...I know that he sustained his injuries over a month ago and only woke up in the past week. He doesn't want to feel useless in a time like this...he feels he should be out here with you guys" she reasoned.

"And now look where he is" I gestured to the healer's.

"(sigh) Astrid, once the healer says it's alright for him to see visitors, go in there and talk to him...work something out alright?" she asked.

"I can't promise you anything" I replied.

"I'm not asking you to...just come to an agreement about ground rules...and make sure he understands" she said with a wink and trudged off to help the others.

She was right; as soon as their healer informed me that I could see him, I was going to get down to that.

Hiccup's POV (1 Hour Later)

"You'll be staying here for the night, sir, to make sure your wounds will not reopen" Helga said. She was the head healer in this village and was also one of the strictest I heard...which is weird since she was extremely nice and patient with me, given my knowledge of how I am a lousy patient.

I nodded my head in reply, too exhausted to speak. Must be because of those specific herbs she made me take. There weren't many others in the room. There was a man on the far side with, I believe is his wife and daughter; the girl, no more than six, cuddling into her father's chest while the mother sat on a chair beside the bed, holding her husband's hand.

"He kept about ten Berserkers off me when they first attacked" a voice next to me spoke. I turned my head to the left and there was Thuggory, propped up with a few pillows behind him against the backboard of his bed. "Suffered a few cuts and one stab wound into his thigh. Luckily he was put in a room with a healer who smuggled in a few medicines with her and she managed to keep an infection from spreading. Did fall sick but better than having an infection destroy your leg" he finished.

"I know what you mean" I said gesturing to the hidden, but evident, prosthetic under my covers.

"Well you lost yours due to a dragon" he said.

"Same thing" I replied. We looked at it each other for about five seconds before bursting into laughter.

"Ow...Thug, please don't make me laugh. I don't want to reopen this wound again...plus my painkillers are wearing off" I said.

"Sure thin' Hic. So I take it you barely survived your duel with Drago?" he asked.

"What gave that away?" I asked sarcastically.

"Well, the scar in the middle of your abdomen is a dead give away, then the cuts and scrapes on your arms, the bruising on your chest..."

"I was being sarcastic."

"Really? I thought you were serious" he said with a chuckle, getting a small one out of me as well. "It is good to see you again Hic" he said, beaming a smile that was usually reserved for friends who hadn't seen each other in years.

"Same here" I replied. "So, how did you fair in your fight?" I asked.

"Well, just a few scrapes and cuts, a sprained writs and few bruised ribs...nothing I can't handle" he said, gesturing to his bandaged right forearm and all the cloths wrapped around, what I suspected,

were cuts.

"Pff...basically nothing close to my battle wounds" I gloated.

"Wounds, for once, I am not glad to hold."

"Good...cause you'll never want to" I said, the two of us laughing.

"Is he alright?" I heard a soft and angelic voice asked. However, I knew all too well what would happen if she were to step inside this room.

"He is, just regained consciousness a while ago. I'll be stepping outside to see if any others need my help, but please do call if something happens" I heard Helga say. _Oh no_.

"Thuggory, are your arms still good?"

"Yes..w"

"Chuck me out that window...now!" I said, turning my head over to see if she was coming in.

"What?"

"Get up, get over here, and throw me out that window...now!" I urged and he continued to stare at me. "Look, I never believed you when you said you were strong...here's your chance to prove me wrong!" I tried to reason with him.

"Was that your girlfriend just speaking with Helga now?" he asked, looking past me and trying to see the entrance, completely ignoring my pleas. "I think I see her...oh, she's coming in here and Helga has just walked out" he commented, and I could hear her footsteps get louder. Luckily, she was coming in where I couldn't see her since I had my head turned towards Thuggory, so I closed my right eye, keeping my left eye open to check on Thuggory's facial expressions to see if he would give me away.

I could hear her steps get closer and stopped at the edge of my bed, where my back was facing. "Hiccup, I know you're awake" she said. Clearly she didn't think I was sleeping. I looked to Thuggory, who managed to keep a straight face at what was transpiring.

"Hiccup, please turn around so we can talk" she said, and judging by the sound of her voice, she was tired and was in no mood to be toyed with.

"Uh...I'll head out and check up on how the village is doing" Thuggory said, slowly getting up and walking off, not before I mouthed traitor, to which he grinned back.

"The only other people in here is that family in the far corner, Hiccup, and I don't think they'll pay attention to what we'll say" she said.

I reluctantly turned over, with some effort, and faced her. She had a disappointed a look on her face, the kind I've seen mothers give to

their children when they've done something incredibly stupid.

"Don't you have anything to say?" she asked, folding her arms over her chest and cocking her hip the way she always did when she was annoyed at someone.

"Well...I can't say 'I'm sorry' since that's irrelevant right now...the only thing left to say is that you're right" I answered meekly, trying to shrink into the bed as much as possible.

"I know I'm right...maybe you should start listening more often" she said, not breaking her gaze. I was trying so hard not to look back at her. "Do you know how difficult you are?" she asked, sitting down on the bed beside mine.

"How am I difficult?" I retort.

"You're stubborn as Hel, you _never _listen, you always put yourself in crap situations...need I go on?" she asks.

"I'm sorry if I try and do the right thing..."

"There's a difference between doing the right thing and doing something on Snotlout's level" she remarked.

"Okay...that's low" I said. I wasn't mad that she said it was Snotlout's level. I was annoyed that she said I _did _something of his level.

"It may be, but it's the truth. Why couldn't you just stay put and heal like all the other injured soldiers?"

"Like you would have done the same" I said, folding my arms and looking away.

"I would have Hiccup...albeit involving a huge argument between me and you but I know that you would have convinced me to rest and heal properly...why can't you follow your own advice?" she asked.

"You're only saying that because you know you wouldn't have done the same thing if in my position" I replied.

"Hiccup! Have you been listening to a _single _word I've said!? I would have listened to you...something you seem to never do with me!" she yelled. It was obvious I was wearing her patience thin.

"Why is did you leave when I asked you, to rest and heal!? WHY!?" she said, her face literally over mine.

"Because I didn't want to be useless!" I yelled back.

"Wha-"

"I didn't want to be useless...not again" I replied more quietly, after seeing her shocked expression. "I was the only person there not doing anything...Fishlegs was helping my mother plan ahead, Gustav and the younger teens were helping them to train some of the dragons and all the women and men we rescued were busy making more weapons while I was just sitting about doing nothing. I'm the one who's usually part of the planning...Hel, I _make _the plans. I'm the one

who oversees everything; the training, the forging of weapons, even what material they used but no, I was confined to my cave. Every now and then would my mother or Fishlegs come in and give me a report of what's going on, but I wouldn't be able to help because I am confined to my own cave! That's why I took Toothless and flew here. That's why I broke your trust...because I didn't want to be useless again" I explained.

"Hiccup...you are not..."

"I know it sounds dumb...thinking I'm useless again when in fact I'm not...but the truth is...I'm scared that that will happen again. I have had a few nightmares in where I've gone back to my old self, the destructive Hiccup, the Hiccup who couldn't carry a rope properly if his life depended on it, the one who wanted to prove himself constantly...I was afraid of becoming that Hiccup again. I just..." I shook my head, not believing how stupid I sounded.

"Hiccup" she said.

"I know what you're gonna say and please don't mmmm..." I was cut off when she placed her lips on mine, creating a soft, loving kiss for about five seconds before pulling away, and taking a hold of my right hand in both of hers.

"Why didn't you tell me about those nightmares or how you felt?" she asked.

"Because it wasn't your burden to bear" I replied.

"Hiccup...we are much more beyond a mere dating couple...I trust you with my life, and I know you trust me with yours, and that we would do anything to protect each other, even die for each other which you've already proven, but please don't keep me in the dark about anything...otherwise I wouldn't know how to support you in what you're going through...and I always want to be there for you."

"And another thing...never ever, think of yourself as useless. People, including myself, might have seen you like that over eight years ago...but I was sure as Thor glad that I was wrong for doing so, because we were too blind to see the true potential you would show us four years ago. What I believe now, is that you were never useless, we just made you think and feel that way. So don't go blaming yourself if you feel useless because you were and will never be useless again...in my eyes at least" she said, staring into my eyes, and I could see she meant every word she said.

"Thanks Astrid." She smiled and nodded her head at the compliment.

"OW! What was that for!?" I yelled, clutching my right shoulder.

"That was for thinking you were useless and being stupid" she replied.

"Then where's the kiss?"

"You got that before."

"Oh, so now we're mixing things up?"

"Appears that way" she replied with a small smile. I sighed and laid back against the backboard.

"Well...I did deserve it, after all" I said with a small chuckle.

"I'm guessing your wound reopened, is that correct?" she asked.

"Yes...it was the stab wound by Drago, apparently it had reopened some time along our flight here, but I never noticed it. She said I wouldn't have had anyway because apparently, my shirt was stuck to the leather armour, so I never felt the 'wet' shirt touch my skin" I explained.

"You're lucky you collapsed in a village instead of on Toothless" she said, and I nodded in agreement.

"Seems like you two have made up" I heard Cami's voice, and we both saw her and Thuggory walk in, the latter more slowly.

"Hopefully he knows now when to rest instead of charging in to save the day" Astrid teased me.

"Well I would if you don't keep getting yourself captured...OW!" I yelled as she punched me again. "I'm injured here!"

"Your abdomen is, not your arm, so that's fair game for me" she said with a smug grin.

"I've sent a few of my ships out to meet the rest of you when they show up on the horizon" Cami said, sitting beside Astrid.

"So what are we going to do when Eret and his men arrive? Drago would surely send men to get him back" Thuggory said.

"That's what we're counting on but if he doesn't, we might get some valuable insight about his next move" said Astrid.

"That is if he's willing to cooperate" I added.

"Oh he will, I'll make sure of that" Thuggory said, cracking his knuckles.

"I don't know Thug, the guy looks like he can beat you in hand-to-hand combat" I said.

"Please...I have yet to be beaten in hand combat" he said, laying back down on his bed.

"Their ship should be here at night, so keep the torches ablaze by the docks and at the watchtowers" Astrid said, and a 'Will do' from Cami.

"So, we've got a game plan and all we have to do is wait...what do you guys want to do?" Thuggory asked.

"We can talk about how Hiccup got laid?" Cami suggested. Wait!

"What did you say?" I asked, hoping I heard wrong.

"Oh...I know both of yours' little secret...figured it out when I saw Astrid taking a contraceptive...it's better to take if you make it into a tea, you know?" she suggested to Astrid, who just smiled and rolled her eyes at the attempt to embarrass me.

"You should really start taking them more discreetly" I remarked with a smile.

"Well I wouldn't be taking it if someone didn't bang me, would I?" she shot back with a grin, erupting fits of laughter from Thuggory and Cami. I was sure a shade of crimson crossed my face...but if I was going down, I would be taking her down with me.

"Well if I recall correctly, you didn't offer _any _resistance whatsoever...instead _'please Hiccup...please..." _I laughed when she slammed a pillow right into my face. When it fell down, I could see her face blushing a deep red that I never thought was possible. Thuggory and Cami were laughing as hard as ever.

"I mean, I saw the look on your face when you saw it, Astrid...and I knew you were worried..."

"Stop right there!" she yelled playfully punching my arm.

"I mean she was basically scared that it wouldn't...ah!" I yelled as literally lunged at me and covered my mouth with her hands.

"Don't say another word if you know what's good for you" she said in a semi serious tone.

"Or what?" I asked, arching my eyebrow, pulling her hands down with mine. That's when she let a seductive grin plaster her face and she inched her mouth towards my right ear.

"Otherwise...well, let's just say you won't feel this for a while" she said and blew air in a particular way that only half the air she blew brushed my ear and...by Thor was it enticing, and I knew what she was implying.

"As you wish Milady" I said, as if in a trance and not looking at her.

"Good" she whispered and pulled back, and gave me another punch to snap me out of it.

"What are the chances that this arm is purple now?" I asked, rubbing the incredibly sore muscle.

"Pretty high" Cami said, wiping away a few tears from her eyes.

"Glad to see you two enjoying the show" said Astrid, making herself comfortable on the edge of the bed and taking my hand in hers.

"Well, it's not everyday that a young couple as yourselves argue about such topics" Thuggory replied from his bed.

"That's why we're a one of kind couple" Astrid said.

"I can vouch for that" I replied.

"And I'm sure so can the rest of your village" Cami said with a laugh.

Just then we heard a horn blow. "That's the signal that you're friends are in sight" she said. "I'll go meet them" she said, leaving to the exit.

"Aren't you going?" I asked Astrid.

"No...someone has to make sure you rest this time" she smiled.

"And who better to do it than you?" I asked sarcastically. But she was right to. I would have sneaked out at one point anyway.

"You know it" she replied.

****A/N: I know nothing much happened in this chapter. Guess you could say it was a bit of a filler one. Anyway, I hope you guys enjoyed it!****

34. Are You The Valkyrie?

****Hey guys! I have great news...I'm DONE my IB EXAMS! And now b/c I'm basically done my courses, I get summer vacation a month earlier, which means ... yep, you guessed it. MORE time for writing, which is what I'm "assuming" you guys want. ****

****Also, I've realized that, and I hope you guys have also realized, that this story and _The Past Defines The Future _didn't really start out well, in terms of writing skills and the plot basis and how I convey the emotions and internal conflicts the characters are having. I've read the stories of EmmerzK, , Cathrath, Midoriko-sama and many other authors here that I just stay hooked on to their work no matter how much internal conflict it causes me, b/c they're just so good.****

****I hope you've noticed that even as my stories go on, I try to improve my style of writing, looking more in-depth about the characters and maybe trying to fill out the gaps that I'm sure I've left open. I'm still working on my writing, and I hope you guys can, as you all have always been, give comments about my writing and areas that I need to improve on. I don't care if it's harsh criticism or the occasional 'good chapter'. I just want to keep improving myself b/c I know I can make my stories better and I _need _you guys to help me to do that.****

****I also can't believe the movie is so close! Just over 13 days left for it. I'm actually glad that they show 2 or 3 shows before the actual release date. So I'll be going to see it on June 12th and since it's also my birthday that day, it will be all the more special to see it. ****

****Anyway, without further-ado, onto the chapter.****

****And could someone fill me in, on what a beta reader is? Is it another reader who proof reads the chapter you've just written and makes edits where they feel necessary?****

****P.S. Sorry for the long delay.****

****Also, this chapter isn't filled with angst or drama or action. Just one of those filler chapters of humour, slight smut and cuteness.

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><p>The docks were bustling with extra activity ever since they saw the Phantom on the horizon ... and was now about a half-a-mile off the docks. At that moment, the dockworkers saw a Whispering Death rise from the ship, with a rope attached to it and began heading in their direction, pulling the formidable vessel with relative ease behind it. They immediately recognized it as one of the dragons that helped liberate their village from Drago's control. With the great beast pulling the vessel, it reached the docks in no time.

Snotlout, Ripper and the Twins tossed ropes over the side where the Bog women were waiting for them, and tied the ropes to secured posts. Some other women got the planks ready and immediately placed them once the ropes were secured.

"Uh ... any chance you can fly me to whatever place I'll be staying?" asked Eret, falling back onto the deck and trying to make himself smaller.

"Why are doing that?" Ripper asked, ignoring the question.

"Well, let's just say there are a lot of women here who I've had the pleasure to meet and never left on good terms with" he blurted out as fast as possible.

"Alright ladies, you have the opportunity to take the prisoners to their cells" Ripper yelled as he walked off the ship, not before giving Eret an amused smile.

"I'll stay with him and make sure they don't rip him apart" Ruff said, but they both couldn't help but feel satisfaction at hearing the angry voices and some, unbelievable screams, by Eret. Razorcut rejoined Ripper's side after the ropes were removed from him.

"So I see Hiccup tasked you as the poster boy again" Cami said, walking up to him and giving him a hug.

"By now you'd think I'm used to it" Ripper replied with a chuckle. "So where are Hiccup and Astrid?"

"They're at the healer's. Apparently Hiccup's stab wound reopened and he was bleeding without even knowing on his way here. Only realized something was wrong when he fell to the ground clutching his stomach" she briefed him. And as expected, Ripper halted his steps and stared at her as if she had a beard growing.

"Why am I not surprised" he said shaking his head and hanging it.

"Because it's Hiccup" she stated.

"That's reason enough for me. Is he in bed, or did he run off somewhere?"

"He's in bed. Astrid's making sure of it"

"That's enough punishment for him, don't you think?" he asked with a chuckle.

"After what he did to us in Atlaka? I don't think so" she said shaking her head, and holding either side of her arms, laughing.

"Well, in his defense he had to make it look legitimate" Ripper said with a shrug of his shoulders.

"But making us have a full out make-out session in the inn was not the way to do it" she said.

"You're saying I'm not a good kisser? At least I'm better than Hiccup since you kissed both of us. By the way, don't mention that you kissed him in front of Astrid. She will not take her jealousy out on trees if she does hear it"

"Don't worry ... I'll wait until he's made a _full _recovery and then tell her" she said with a grin.

"What makes you so sure she won't come after you?"

"Oh, because at that stage she'll be too angry to think straight, so if I said Hiccup _kissed _me, she'll go berserk on him" said Cami with a devious smirk, one that could rival Loki's.

"Sometimes, you scare me ... a lot" he remarked, taking a step away from her. He technically did have a right to be scared since he's heard, and seen, what Cami can do to _anyone_, mostly men, if they manage to step over her temper ... which is relatively short.

"Good" she replied smugly and pressed on ahead of him towards the healer's. The conversation proceeded to take a shift to the talks of the upcoming plans and counter-attacks against Drago. Their options were, believe it or not, quite limited.

Drago had an array of associates in Atlaka, along with many connections in their army, as well as between two or three dozen villages under him. He had the resources unlike them, he had _much _more firepower than them, and his fleet alone makes Dagur's armada look like Berk's fleet, and that is the hard truth. They were, in essence, already beaten.

But they wouldn't be Vikings if they didn't have their stubbornness issues, would they?

"Hopefully Eret can give some insight about his next plans" Cami said as they opened the door of the healer's building.

"Since he's an arms dealer of dragons, he'll want a deal ... are we willing to offer him one?" asked Ripper.

"Here's the deal ... you tell us _everything _there is to know about Drago, and I won't castrate you" she said, walking into the sick bay.

"That's enough to make any man squeal" Ripper said with a chuckle, and soon he gaze landed on the infamous duo on one of the beds on the left side of the large room.

"Please tell me _weren't _talking about me" Hiccup said, his eyes showing terror and anxiety.

"Please don't ... otherwise it won't be the same for me" Astrid said with a cheeky grin, earning a snort from Cami and Thuggory, who was on his bed beside Hiccup.

"Nice to know you're thinking about me" Hiccup retorted with an eye-roll.

"So what's the news? Has Eret started talking?" asked Astrid.

"Not yet, he would like to meet with Hiccup though ... has a lot of questions for you" Ripper said, folding his arms over his chest.

"Dragon related?"

"Mostly between how you got Astrid as your girlfriend"

"Well, that's easy ... my raw Viking-ness, my smarts, my looks and my sense of humour" he said, rather smugly.

"Yep, you are a one of a kind catch" Astrid said with an eye-roll, while he traced circles on her hand that he was holding.

"Okay ... apart from that, he'll only talk to you, since you're the only one he hasn't had the pleasure to meet ... well, to get to have some idea about you" said Ripper.

"Well, I look forward to meeting him, once the healer has discharge me, of course" he said, getting more comfortable, and Astrid shifting her position on the bed to make it more comfortable for him as well.

"She did tell me that you'll be able to leave tomorrow, once she knows your wound will have _no _chance of reopening again" she said.

"Don't worry, I've learned my lesson. I'll stay put when I'm seriously injured" said Hiccup, statement directed at everyone in the room so that they'll believe him this time. Of course they wouldn't believe him, but would keep a watchful eye over him in any case where he disobeys a healer's or their orders.

"Well, I think it's time I hit the hay ... see you guys tomorrow" Cami said, bidding a small wave and walking out. It's only then the others turned their attention to one of the small windows in the room and noticed it was night outside.

"I think it's time I left as well. Rest well Hiccup" Ripper said,

following Cami's steps.

"Goodnight guys" Astrid called out as they heard the front door close.

"Aren't you going with them?" asked Hiccup.

"And leave you here all alone ... with the exception of Thuggory? I don't think so" she said, pulling back the sheets and lying down beside her boyfriend. The bed was just wide enough for two people to fit in. "You're staying put here in bed, where I can keep an eye on you and if you even think about shuffling your way out of my grasp when I'm asleep, I can't guarantee I will not constrict you" she said.

"Okay, okay. I get it. No sneaking out with you here" he retorted, making himself comfortable underneath the covers.

"Goodnight Hiccup" she said, giving him a small peck on the lips.

"Goodnight M'Lady" he replied, turning to face her and resting their foreheads together.

"Somebody please gouge my eyes out and rip my ears off" they heard Thuggory whine and couldn't help but laugh at the situation.

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"What?! Who was supposed to meet up with Eret!?" bellowed the voice of a mad Drago. Some soldiers, knowing how he was when his temper rises, already exited the deck and down below into their cabins. Others weren't that lucky. Their tasks required them to stay on deck, and would only be able to leave once their shift was over. However, Drago was walking up and down the deck, demanding answers. None of the soldiers wanted to meet his gaze, which could have turned them to ash with just one peek. Luckily, Orvon was there to answer those questions.

"Well sir, Eret was supposed to meet up with two of our scouting vessels six hours ago. When he didn't show up, the captain sent out a scout to look for them, but when he did find his ship, it was commandeered by the Dragon Riders and the Dragon Vigilante, which we now know her by" he spoke calmly.

"And they didn't do anything to take the ship back!?" asked Drago, turning towards his second in command.

"They were outnumbered sir. The two ships were also too far out to catch up with them. Plus they only had two dragons, which were the scouts so very little firepower was available for them. But they did say, based on their heading, they were sailing to the Meathead's tribe."

"That could only mean they have control over that tribe as well ... Why do I even bother taking control of these tribes if I just lose them again" he sighed in exasperation. "I've already lost the Bog Burglars, and now the Meatheads, their next target will obviously be Berk" he said, rubbing away the stress that were present as bags

under his eyes.

"No doubt about that sir. I suggest we actually take matters into our own hands and send dragons to protect Berk, since we can't obviously trust Dagur's men to keep Berk under their control" he said.

"You're right ... I want a squad of Nightmares and Nadders sent to defend Berk. NOW!" he yelled and soon there were running steps over his deck, the men getting their dragons and preparing for the long journey.

"Those Dragon Riders are more resourceful than I expected" said Drago, in a much calmer voice. He made his way to the captain's deck where Deathwing was resting, watching the activity with mild interest. He knew that when his rider had this temper, he shouldn't try to mess with him.

"The Vigilante might have something to do with it ... especially with her dragon, the Stormcutter" Orvon replied, a few steps behind his leader.

"We needed Eret to help determine the location of it" Drago said leaning against the railing, watching his men take off for Berk.

"Actually sir, we don't" Orvon said, and judging by the tone of his voice, he could tell his friend had a small grin. "We've found it" he stated simply. Drago turned around slowly, hoping he wasn't just telling him this to lighten up his mood, but since this was his most trusted friend and commander, he had little reason to lie to him.

"Where?"

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"Rise and shine sleepyheads!" came the blow-horn that the riders and others have come to know as Ripper's mouth. The man was banging the tip of his sound, creating an incredibly annoying noise, while at the same time shouting orders for his friends to wake up.

"Did he do this during your time away?" Astrid asked, pulling the blanket over both their heads to try and drown out the noise.

"Be lucky he didn't come in here and throw a bucket of freezing water on us" he replied groggily, and burying his head deeper into the pillow.

"Sometimes I wonder if your training was harder than living with him" she said, this time bringing a hand to cover her ear.

"Believe me, it wasn't" he replied. At that moment, the covers were pulled from their exhausted forms, allowing more light to reach their eyes and cause them to hiss a bit at the sudden brightness.

"Hope things didn't get crazy between the two of you last night" he said with a chuckle, only to be met by un-amused glares from the couple. "Breakfast will be served in their main hall, and the healer will be here in a few minutes to check on your status Hiccup" he told them, before proceeding to wake up Thuggory.

"Better get ready then" she said, swinging her legs over the side of the bed and reaching for her boots. Hiccup reluctantly removed his head from the comfy pillow he was given and stretched the stiffness away from his arms, running his hand through his hair to get it into its shaggy-self.

"It seems Ripper beat me to you" they heard the voice of Helga, the head healer of the Meathead tribe.

"Yeah, lucky us" Thuggory grumbled angrily, and glared at the now leaving form of Ripper, who was casting smug grins at the three of them.

"Well, I'll just do a quick check over you two and then you can go clobber him" she said nicely, placing the tray of medicines and bandages down on Thuggory's bed, inspecting him first.

"You're making nice recovery, Thuggory. The wrist is alright, your cuts have healed and your bruises are fading ... you're good to go" she said, after removing some of his bandages, which were no longer needed, and replacing a few others, not before applying more medicinal treatment.

"And let me check on you Master Hiccup" she said, removing the blanket from his torso, and unwrapping the bandage covering his stab wound. "Ah yes, it's healing again nicely" she commented. She grabbed a flagon and poured water over his wound and scrubbed it gently, washing out any impurities or any stray and possible infections. She then grabbed a new bandage and applied some herbal ointment onto his wound, before wrapping the new one around his torso.

"Make sure you don't exert yourself too much this time Master Hiccup" she said, making sure the bandage was tied properly.

"Oh don't worry, I'll make sure of that" Astrid commented, watching the whole procedure.

"Nurse Astrid ... I like the sound of that" Hiccup said with his lopsided grin.

"Believe me ... you're not going to like the nurse" she said with an evil smile, however she was laughing on the inside when she saw Hiccup's face go pale, immediately telling her he knew what she meant.

Helga chuckled lightly at their banter. Never had she met a young couple with their kind of relationship, until now. "Alright Hiccup, just take it nice and easy and let that wound heal properly. That means no flying on Toothless for at least two to three days" she said, gathering up the used bandages and her medicinal treatments. Hiccup however wasn't pleased with the idea.

"Two to three days?" he asked, and his facial expressions told the rest of the story.

"Do you want that wound to open again?" she shot back.

"Well ... I ... the thing is" he stammered but it was an obvious answer.

"I'm sure your dragon has the patience to not fly for three days. If not ask someone else to do it for you" she said, getting up and leaving.

"If only you knew my dragon" he muttered under his breath, getting a laugh out of Astrid as well.

"I'll take him for his flights, don't you worry" she said, holding out her hand, offering to help him up. He gladly grabbed hold of her hand and was pulled onto his feet slowly, her making sure he didn't exert too much or sudden movements.

"Come on. I've got to meet this Eret guy myself" he said.

"Not before your breakfast mister" she said, putting his arm around her shoulder and hers around his waist to help support him.

"You sound just like my mother, you know that?"

"Well I wouldn't if you would just be good wittle boy and do as he's told" she said in a voice that Hiccup had _never _heard before.

"What did you just..."

"Tell anyone I spoke like that and you're dead" she said back in her normal and threatening voice.

"I'll take my chances" he replied with a grin she knew all too well. She would have elbowed him in the gut but knew he was still healing. She could punch him in the arm but in their current position she couldn't. She did try it before but that only succeeded in him pulling her down and being embarrassed in front of the whole village. She didn't want the same situation to occur in another village. So this time, she decided to withhold more threats, since she did find it amusing when he learned the hard way.

The pair stepped outside and were immediately met with the sun's warm rays and a cool breeze. Only was it now that they realized the Meatheads climate was just a bit warmer than Berk's. But given Berk was known for its cold climate, a bit goes a long in making a difference. Most of the village was already bustling with the usual activity of repairing damaged buildings and rebuilding their defenses in case of attack.

"Come on, their Hall is this way" Hiccup gestured to a path that led uphill.

Most of the Vikings they passed ran up to Hiccup to wish him well and that they were glad to see them. He honestly didn't like the attention of a celebrity. Even after five years since the Red Death incident, he's still coming to terms with being in the eye of everyone. Well technically three years since he was away for two and some of the places he visited hadn't heard of what he endeared.

"Hiccup! Hiccup!" the two young adults heard someone shouting. They turned around and saw a little girl, whom they expected no more than six, running up to them.

"Addie!" Hiccup also matched the girl's excitement, to a lesser extent. He knelt down onto his good knee and the little girl ran into him at full speed. "Ompf! Addie, I'm so glad to see you" he said, hugging the little girl tightly.

"Me too! I heard you were sick! Are you alright?" she asked, moving her head back to see Hiccup's face, concern written all over it.

"Ha, I'm fine Addie, really I am" he said, standing up and carrying her in his arms.

"Are you sure?" she asked, voice filled with concern still.

"It's you I should be worried about, Addie. Those Berserkers didn't hurt you did they?" he asked, raising his eyebrows, getting a giggle out from her.

"No they didn't. They only hurt papa" she said, looking down sadly. "Mama said they broke his arm and leg" she said, a tear running down her cheek at the memory seeing her father in pain.

"Hey hey, it's okay. I'm sure your papa made them pay. Nobody messes with him or his little girl without getting away alive" he said in a low voice that was supposed to sound dangerous but only made her laugh.

Astrid watched the scene in front of her with a fuzzy feeling in her chest. Hiccup never mentioned meeting this little cutie when he came here. That's when Addie noticed Astrid and shrank a bit into Hiccup's chest. Said man wondered why she was doing this but then noticed she was looking at Astrid, who he forgot about for the moment. Astrid raised a small hand and waved slightly at Addie, who shyly waved back.

"Hiccup, aren't you going to introduce me to your little friend?" she asked, coming to stand by him, and keeping that spark in her eyes which she always had when she met young children and babies.

"That's right. Where are my manners? Addie, this is my best friend Astrid. Astrid, this is Addie, she's my number one fan of all the Meatheads here" Hiccup said, propping Addie up on his arm better so it was more comfortable for him and her.

"Hi there" Astrid said, bringing her face closer to the young girl.

"Hi" Addie replied in a soft, incredibly cute voice. "Wait ... are you the Valkyrie Hiccup was speaking about to my parents?" she asked, causing both young adults to visibly blush.

"Hiccup called me what?" she asked the small girl.

"He stayed with us one night and mama and papa were talking to him. He talked with mama and papa about a very, very pretty girl who like he liked ... a lot" she added.

"Really?" Astrid asked, raising an eyebrow at Hiccup, who was a deep shade of pink now.

Addie nodded her head. "He talked about how beautiful she was and him being blessed by Odin, Thor and all the Gods that he was friends with" she said. Astrid's eyes simply grew in realization at how much the little girl had heard and couldn't help but keep glancing at Hiccup, whose skin was now red until the base of his neck.

"Thank you for telling me, Addie. How old are you?" she asked, switching to another for Hiccup's benefit. But she made a mental note to talk with Addie about more stuff she overheard and embarrass Hiccup later.

"Five winters. Getting close to my sixth" she replied, more confident this time.

"Nearly six winters! You're a big girl" Astrid commented, brushing a few stray blonde hairs away from Addie's face, who was comfortable with Astrid doing it. Since she saw Hiccup was comfortable with the young woman, she knew she could be too.

She reached her arms out from Hiccup, silently asking to be carried by her. "Come here" she said with a laugh, taking Addie into her arms, and kept her propped up with her left arm.

"I love your hair" the small girl said, touching Astrid's braid and a sparkle in her eyes at how beautiful it was.

"Thank you" she replied, moving her head so it brought her braid closer for Addie to see.

"Do you ride a dragon?" she asked.

"Yes I do in fact ... a Deadly Nadder named Stormfly. She would love to meet you" Astrid said, knowing how Stormfly loved little children. She was always so gentle with them and let them play on her, pet her (as she loved the attention) and took them for rides with her rider.

"Is she pretty like you?" Addie asked, causing a slight shade of pink to brush Astrid's cheeks.

"She is Addie, believe me" Hiccup said, standing next to Astrid.

"Where are your parents Addie?" asked Astrid.

"They're both at home. Mama has to look after papa" she said.

"And they let you come out alone?" Hiccup asked, raising an eyebrow.

"No ... I sneaked out" she said, looking down with a small mischievous smile.

"Guess who she reminds me of Hiccup?" Astrid said, looking at her boyfriend with a knowing smile, and said man scratched his neck and looked away with a guilty grin. "Did you see Hiccup sneaking out when he was here?" she asked her, and the little girl nodded her head. "Aw, see Hiccup, you're a bad influence" Astrid said with fake angry face at him.

"W-what ... Now see h-here ... I-I" he stammered before Addie interrupted him.

"I see him sneak out on nights when everyone's sleeping ... and take Gummy out for rides" she said, pointing at Hiccup, who only struggled to find more words to speak.

"Gummy?" Astrid asked, chuckling a bit.

"When I first met with her she was only three and learning to speak. When she first saw Toothless, he smiled his gummy smile at her, and she stuck with the name" he said. It was actually a nice memory from his two year journey. He had come to the Meathead village about four months after he left, and after the regular misunderstanding about Toothless, they started to see what dragons really were. He met Addie by accident. Being three, she still hadn't grown out of her adventurous faze, and had come up to Toothless who didn't notice the girl at first, but then felt something touch right foreleg. When he looked down he saw a small baby rubbing his scales and then she looked up at him, green-cat eyes meeting small brown ones.

He then proceeded to lie down on his stomach and examined the little human with curiosity as she stood up and tried to make her way to touch his snout. She almost fell but he managed to get his snout in front of her in time and help her stand back up. She smiled openly at him, and that's when he smiled back at her, with his gummy smile and she called him Gummy immediately. And all this took place in front of the village, which found it ridiculously adorable.

"Addie! There you are" they heard a voice and turned to see a woman running to them. She appeared to be in her thirties by the look of it and was thinner than most women here.

"Mama!" the small girl responded and reached her hands out to be taken by her mother. Astrid, reluctantly, let Addie's mother take her into her arms. She was really enjoying talking to and holding the little girl.

"What did I tell you about sneaking off?" she asked. She was concerned as, from the sweat on her forehead, she had been running around looking for her.

"Sorry mama" she said, looking down and feeling bad for causing her mama to worry.

"Thank Thor you ran into Hiccup here. By the way how are you Hiccup? How's the wound holding up?" she asked.

"Good morning Mrs. Haraldson. I'm doing a lot better and the wound is healing nicely" he replied.

"Yeah ... if you learn to follow the healer's orders this time" Astrid said, shooting him a knowing look.

"You must be Astrid. Hiccup talked a lot about you when he stayed with us for a night" she said, turning her attention to the young woman.

"I know. Addie here told me what Hiccup told you. It was pretty

flattering" she said, folding her arms over her chest.

"Anyway, I have to head back to help Audun get to the Hall. Nice to see you again Hiccup, and nice to finally meet you Astrid, dear" she said turned around and began making her way back to their house, with Addie waving goodbye over her mother's shoulder.

"That was ... partly embarrassing" he said, breaking the few seconds of silence between them.

"And I can't wait to hear more of it" she said, taking her position beside Hiccup, wrapping her arm around his waist and him placing his arm around her shoulders.

"Can't wait" he mumbled, knowing what he would be in store for that day.

End
file.